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Central BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
presented by

REV. JAMES KUNCE

KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

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BETHLEHEM, WITH THREE NATIVES IN THE FOREGROUND

(The Three Wise Men)

TARBELL'S

TEACHERS' GUIDE

TO THE
INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS
IMPROVED UNIFORM COURSE
FOR 1930

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL VOLUME

MARTHA TARBELL, Ph.D.

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PREPARED BY THE INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON COMMITTEE

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Jan. 29. Luke 18.18-25. FIRST IN AFFECTION.
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Feb. 13. Luke 18.35-43. HEALING THE BLIND.
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X. Sept. 1. 2 Kings 22.1-7. JOSIAH'S GOOD REIGN.
Sept. 2. 2 Kings 23.1-3. JOSIAH'S COVENANT.
Sept. 3. 2 Kings 23.4-8. JOSIAH'S REFORMS.
Sept. 4. 2 Kings 23.21-25. JOSIAH AND THE LAW.
Sept. 5. 2 Chron. 35.20-26. JOSIAH'S DEATH.
Sept. 6. Psalm 119.105-112. LIGHTING THE WAY.
Sept. 7. Psalm 119.9-16. THE YOUNG MAN'S GUIDE.

XI. Sept. 8. Jer. 1.4-10. JEREMIAH'S MISSION.
Sept. 9. Jer. 14.7-9. JEREMIAH'S PRAYER.
Sept. 10. Jer. 31.31-34. THE NEW COVENANT.
Sept. 11. Jer. 38.1-6. JEREMIAH'S SUFFERING.
Sept. 12. Lam. 1.12-19. JEREMIAH'S LAMENT.
Sept. 13. Rom. 14.7-12. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY.
Sept. 14. Psalm 119.33-40. OBEYING THE LAW.

XII. Sept. 15. Jonah 1.1-3. JONAH'S CALL.
Sept. 16. Jonah 1.4-10. JONAH'S FLIGHT.
Sept. 17. Jonah 2.1-10. JONAH'S PRAYER.
Sept. 18. Jonah 3.1-10. JONAH'S PREACHING.
Sept. 19. Jonah 4.1-5. JONAH'S COMPLAINT.
Sept. 20. Jonah 4.6-11. JONAH'S LESSON.
Sept. 21. Psalm 139.7-12. THE OMNIPRESENT GOD.

XIII. Sept. 22. Gen. 12.1-5. THE CALL OF ABRAM.
Sept. 23. Ex. 3.1-8. THE CALL OF MOSES.
Sept. 24. 1 Sam. 10.1-8. THE CALL OF SAUL.
Sept. 25. Amos 7.10-17. THE CALL OF AMOS.
Sept. 26. Jer. 1.1-10. THE CALL OF JEREMIAH.
Sept. 27. Jonah 1.1-23. THE CALL OF JONAH.
Sept. 28. Psalm 8. THE GREATNESS OF THE GOD-FEARING.

FOURTH QUARTER

I. Sept. 29. Luke 1.57-66. NAMING THE CHILD.
Sept. 30. Luke 1.76-80. THE CHILD'S TASK.
Oct. 1. John 4.46-54. HEALTH IN THE HOME.
Oct. 2. 2 Tim. 1.1-6. CHRISTIAN NURTURE.
Oct. 3. 1 Tim. 5.1-8. PROVIDING FOR THE HOME.
Oct. 4. Eph. 6.1-9. HOME RELATIONSHIPS.
Oct. 5. Psalm. 122.1-9. A PRAYER FOR PEACE.

II. Oct. 6. Luke 2.15-20. A THOUGHTFUL MOTHER.
Oct. 7. John 2.1-5. A DISCERNING MOTHER.
Oct. 8. John 19.23-27. A FAITHFUL MOTHER.
Oct. 9. Ex. 2.1-10. THE MOTHER OF MOSES.
Oct. 10. Prov. 31.26-31. A GODLY MOTHER.
Oct. 11. Mt. 15.21-28. A PERSISTENT MOTHER.
Oct. 12. Psalm 67.1-7. A CALL TO PRAISE.

III. Oct. 13. Luke 2.25-32. SIMEON THE RIGHTEOUS.
Oct. 14. Luke 2.33-39. ANNA THE PROPHETESS.
Oct. 15. Psalm 24.1-6. PURE HEARTS IN HOLY PLACES.
Oct. 16. 2 Kings 6.14-19. SEEING THE INVISIBLE.
Oct. 17. 2 Cor. 4.16 to 5.5. SEEING THE ETERNAL.
Oct. 18. Rev. 22.1-5. SEEING HIS FACE.
Oct. 19. Psalm 84.1-12. LONGING FOR GOD'S HOUSE.

IV. Oct. 20. Gal. 5.13-15. TRUE FREEDOM.
Oct. 21. Gal. 5.16-26. SPIRITUAL FREEDOM.
Oct. 22. Gen. 4.9-15. RESPONSIBILITY.

	Oct.	23. Luke 10.29-37. My Neighbor.
	Oct.	24. 1 Tim. 1.3-11. The Purpose of Law.
	Oct.	25. Rom. 13.1-7. Respect for Rulers.
	Oct.	26. Rom. 14.13-21. Mutual Helpfulness.
V.	Oct.	27. Mark 8.27-30. Peter's Confession.
	Oct.	28. Luke 22.31-34. Peter's Presumption.
	Oct.	29. John 18.19-27. Peter's Denial.
	Oct.	30. John 21.15-23. Peter's Mission.
	Oct.	31. Acts 2.14-21. Peter's Message.
	Nov.	1. Acts 4.13-22. Peter's Courage.
	Nov.	2. Phil. 2.1-11. Having the Mind of Christ.
VI.	Nov.	3. John 11.11-16. Thomas Despairing.
	Nov.	4. John 14.1-7. Thomas Inquiring.
	Nov.	5. John ..20.24-29. Thomas Convinced.
	Nov.	6. John 21.1-8. Thomas Enlightened.
	Nov.	7. Mark 9.21-29. Prayer for Belief.
	Nov.	8. John 7.10-18. The Cure for Doubt.
	Nov.	9. Prov. 3.13-20. Wisdom's Worth.
VII.	Nov.	10. Mt. 8.5-13. The Believing Centurion.
	Nov.	11. Jonah 4.6-11. The Ninevites.
	Nov.	12. Acts 17.22-28. All of One Blood.
	Nov.	13. Acts 10.9-16. Peter's Vision.
	Nov.	14. Acts 10.24-29. Peter's Obedience.
	Nov.	15. Acts 10.34-43. Peter's Words.
	Nov.	16. Isa. 60.1-9. The Assembly of the Nations.
VIII.	Nov.	17. Mark 10.17-22. The Rich Young Ruler.
	Nov.	18. Mark 10.23-31. The Handicap of Riches.
	Nov.	19. 1 Tim. 6.3-10. The Danger of Riches.
	Nov.	20. Luke 16.19-25. The Rich Man and Lazarus.
	Nov.	21. 2 Cor. 5.11-19. Living unto Christ.
	Nov.	22. 1 Cor. 10.23-33. All to God's Glory.
	Nov.	23. Psalm 19.7-14. Better than Gold.
IX.	Nov.	24. Luke 19.1-10. Zacchaeus the Publican.
	Nov.	25. Luke 5.27-32. A Tax-Collector.
	Nov.	26. Acts 18.1-6. A Tent-Maker.
	Nov.	27. Mt. 22.34-40. A Lawyer.
	Nov.	28. Ex. 18.13-20. A Judge.
	Nov.	29. Rom. 16.21-27. Many Workers.
	Nov.	30. Psalm 15. Heavenly Citizenship.
X.	Dec.	1. Acts 6.7-15. Stephen's Power.
	Dec.	2. Acts 7.54-60. Stephen Stoned.
	Dec.	3. 1 Kings 22.24-28. Micaiah Persecuted.
	Dec.	4. Jer. 32.1-5. Jeremiah Persecuted.
	Dec.	5. Dan. 6.10-18. Daniel Persecuted.
	Dec.	6. 2 Cor. 1.3-11. Help in Persecution.
	Dec.	7. Isa. 53.7-12. The Sacrifice of Christ.
XI.	Dec.	8. Acts 22.1-5. Saul's Early Life.
	Dec.	9. Acas 22.6-15. Saul's Conversion.
	Dec.	10. Acts 9.10-16. Saul Praying.
	Dec.	11. Acts 9.17-22. Paul Preaching.
	Dec.	12. Acts 16.6-10. Paul's Vision.
	Dec.	13. Acts 21.27-36. Paul Persecuted.
	Dec.	14. Isa. 6.1-8. Isaiah's Call.
XII.	Dec.	15. 2 Tim. 1.1-6. Timothy's Faith.
	Dec.	16. 2 Tim. 3.14-17. Timothy's Instruction.
	Dec.	17. Titus 2.1-8. Love in the Home.
	Dec.	18. Eph. 6.1-9. Training in the Home.
	Dec.	19. 1 Cor. 16.15-20. Worship in the Home.
	Dec.	20. Psalm 128.1-6. A Happy Home.
	Dec.	21. Prov. 3.1-6. Youth and God's Law.
	Dec.	15. Isa. 9.1-7. The Birth Foretold.
	Dec.	16. Micah 5.2-9. The Place Foretold.
	Dec.	17. Isa. 61.1-6. Christ's Work Foretold.
	Dec.	18. Luke 2.1-7. Christ's Birth.
	Dec.	19. Luke 2.8-16. Shepherd Seekers.
	Dec.	20. Luke 2.40-47. The Child in the Temple.
	Dec.	21. Luke 2.48-52. The Child's Growth.
XIII.	Dec.	22. Phil. 2.19-24. A Trustworthy Man.
	Dec.	23. Luke 2.15-21. A Remarkable Mother.
	Dec.	24. Acts 4.5-12. A Changed Man.
	Dec.	25. John 20.24-29. An Honest Doubter.
	Dec.	26. Acts 6.1-8. A Man of Faith.
	Dec.	27. Acts 22.12-21. A World-wide Witness.
	Dec.	28. Mt. 5.3-12. The Blessed Life.

RED LINES INDICATE THE EXTENT OF THE PROVINCES

TARBELL'S TEACHERS' GUIDE

TO THE

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS

IMPROVED UNIFORM COURSE FOR 1930

INTRODUCTION

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

WHAT "GOSPEL" MEANS

The word *gospel* is derived from the two Anglo-Saxon words *god,* good, and *spel,* story or tidings. It represents the Greek *euangelion,* which in the New Testament means *good tidings, good news.* Not every form of good news is gospel. The special item of good news to which the word refers—the salvation of the world by the coming of Jesus Christ—is news that is nineteen hundred years old. Yet we cannot afford to forget the original meaning of the word, for, as has been said, as long as there remains a human soul to whom the gospel can be profitably told or retold, it will be found to possess elements of newness, and it will always be good: the gospel is good news.

At first the records written by the Evangelists were not called Gospels. In the earliest manuscripts they were bound together under the title "The Gospel," and each received its special heading of "According to Matthew," etc. The earliest certain use of the word is the mention by Justin Martyr (about 150 A.D.) of "the apostles in the Memoirs written by themselves, which are called Gospels."

GREAT STUDIES IN A GREAT GOSPEL

In 1926 we studied the Gospel of John; in 1928, the Gospel of Mark; now in 1930 our course covers the Gospel of Matthew; and next year it will cover the Gospel of Luke. We thus have opportunity of gaining, not only a thorough knowledge of the life and teaching of Jesus, but also of the distinctive characteristics of each Gospel. And in the words of Goethe: "Let intellectual and spiritual culture progress, and the human mind expound, as much as it will; beyond the grandeur and the moral elevations of Christianity, as it sparkles and shines in the Gospels, the human mind will not advance."

There is danger these days that Jesus may become a theological formula, that the realization of the historical reality of Jesus may become lost. A professor in one of our universities makes the assertion that the average man today has a better idea, a truer impression, of almost any popular hero of history than he has of Jesus. The life of Jesus, he declares, has been studied, quite unconsciously for the most part, from the point of view of confirming theological opinion rather than from the point of view of learning to know Jesus as he actually was.

We cannot too often read and meditate upon what Jesus was, what he did, and what he said while here on earth. And what a theme this is! We can never fathom its depth and richness. Every year brings a clearer or a fuller interpretation of Jesus' teaching and its application to our day and generation.

While the longest of the Gospels, Matthew can be read thoughtfully through in less than an hour and a half. We have six months for its study, and no part of it should be omitted. Intermediates, Seniors, Young People, and Adults should read in their Bibles the entire lesson assigned each week, not merely the verses printed

in lesson quarterlies or leaflets. In the outline of each lesson given here under Explanations and Comments, the whole Gospel is covered.

THE GREATEST CHARACTER IN ALL HISTORY

"The most important fact of human history, by common agreement, I think, is the fact of Christ's life"—in this way Rufus M. Jones begins one of his books. "There are times," he continues, "when the world seems absorbed in conquest, or in quick temporal successes. But Christ continues through all the shifts and changes to be the major spiritual interest of the race. Theories about him may rise and fall, but he meantime is as vital and as dominant as ever in the heart and mind of all serious persons."

In the dome of the Cathedral at Milan, there is a circle of carved figures representing the prophets, each of which with hand uplifted points to the figure of Jesus in the center of the dome. Jesus must be central in all church school teaching. If the group with which you are concerned is not keen about restudying the life, character and teaching of the Master, you must kindle their interest anew.

A man who has gone more than a hundred times to see Hamlet played, explains his extravagance: "Did you ever have a dear friend whom you heartily admired and loved? Well, then, did you ever get tired of that friend's company? Did you not rather yearn to meet him again when he was absent? Were you not glad to welcome him home after a long journey? Did it not do your heart good to hear him tell his story? Well, then, I love and admire Hamlet, I have put my heart in his excellencies, and could go to see him many hundred times more."

One who has studied the life of Christ cannot help admiring and loving this greatest Character in all history. And in some degree during this year's study of his life and teaching, his ideals will become ours, his principles of living will govern our living, his purposes for a changed humanity will become our purposes.

How close to its Founder is Christianity as lived today? The reader of Stanley Jones' interesting book, The Christ of the Indian Road, becomes convinced that there is a very wide gap between our Western Christianity and the religion of Jesus. Our Western Christianity is not always a religion that develops Christian character and controls social conduct. It is not always the governing principle of life. Christ is not always a real Factor in the professing Christian's life.

A well-known American sculptor made a study of the life of Christ for purposes of his art, with the result that he declared, "Now I have come to know this Christ, everything I have is his, and where he is I want to be." John Stuart Mill well said that a man could have no loftier aim than to seek to so order his life in thought and action as to secure the approval of Jesus Christ.

> "Have you and I today
> Stood silent as with Christ apart from joy or fear
> Of life, to see by faith his face;
> To look, if but a moment, at its grace,
> And grow, by brief companionship, more true,
> More *nerved to lead*, to dare, to do
> For him at any cost?"

WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE WISH TO KNOW ABOUT CHRIST

"What are the religious interests of young people today?" a religious educator was asked, and his prompt reply was, "Most of them have none."

While there are hosts of young people who are very much interested in religion, their interest changes from time to time in religion as in all things else. Possibly the chief objection of young people to church and church school is that, in their estimation, the services are too far removed from life.

Some twenty or thirty years ago our high-minded, idealistic young people in school and college listened with ardent fervor to the message of the social gospel. Their interest in their fellow men had quickened, and when the realization came to them that Jesus spoke with authority concerning social righteousness, their services were quickly enlisted.

As we study the young people of today, however, in their statements, their conferences, groups, etc., we find the emphasis has shifted. The thoughtful young person of today is deeply interested in the vital experiences of religion in his own life. He is a bit shy of authority, save the authority of his own experience. He

is desirous of such a real contact with Christ that he can say with the blind man, "One thing I *know*, that whereas I was blind, now I see."

Mr. Granville Hicks quotes a Korean student at Yale as saying: "They [the students] are not discussing war or race; they are discussing God and Christ. On almost every campus you can see evidence of this new personal note." Not long ago a famous preacher spoke in a college town, and as a group of girls was discussing his sermon with frank criticism, an older friend said to them, "But he is a very famous man, a modernist; you ought to like him." The reply was significant of their clear thinking. "It makes no difference to us whether a man is a modernist or a fundamentalist, the man we want to hear and know is the one who has a real, first-hand knowledge of God and Christ."

Young people listen with candid lack of interest to the platitudes and uncertainties of older Christians. They demand reality in religion. They demand a real, vital contact with Christ. To thoughtful Christian teachers these facts bring a challenge, both as to their teaching and their own lives. Have they that vital power of religion which will lead young people to feel the reality of God? Can they say with Paul, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me"? And can they lead their pupils to see that in the service for others, in the social gospel, one may find an experience of God that is real and satisfying? "I am convinced that the social gospel cannot be detached from the individual gospel, and retain its authority and efficacy. The saviors of society in any Christian sense of the term must be saved men. Consecration to God is a stronger and more enduring motive of social service than compassion for men."

The religion of Jesus, it has well been said, is not a narcotic but a challenge. It is an active, not a passive, religion. It consists not only in not doing certain things but also in doing certain things. It calls for heroic living. Youth loves a challenge. Youth responds to an appeal to pay the price of a life of high adventure. Just as Jesus looked upon that rich young ruler with love and yearned to win him to truer ideals, so he looks upon every young man and woman today and covets their powers for the service of others. This is your opportunity this year, to win and hold your pupils for Christ, and to lead them on into lives of Christian service. When a class is carrying on some definite form of service for others, there will be regular attendance and unflagging interest.

A FEW PEDAGOGICAL METHODS OF THE MASTER TEACHER

The Greatest of Teachers

"Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God," thus Nicodemus, the teacher of Israel, addressed Jesus. Rabbi, Teacher, was the familiar title of Jesus; disciples (learners) was the name given his followers. Jesus himself spoke of his mission as that of teaching: "I sat daily in the temple teaching, and ye took me not," he said to his enemies when they arrested him with a great show of force. Among all the ways in which Jesus was supremely great, was the way of the Teacher.

Every time we have a course in the Gospels I think of Browning's words:

"Here's work enough to watch
The Master work, and catch
Hints of proper craft,
Tricks of the tool's true play,"

and wish that we could study together the craftsmanship of the Master Teacher. Would you secure the interest of your class, would you know what to teach, would you gain aptitude in imparting that knowledge, would you teach wisely with the great aim of leading your pupils to openly declare themselves for Christ and his service—then study, not half-seriously but whole-heartedly, the methods of the Greatest of Teachers.

He Knew his Pupils

Jesus chose the Twelve that they might be with him. Making himself their Comrade and Friend, he shared their experiences and won their confidences. He took long walks with them. He often went boat-riding with them, and he told them where the fishing was best. He picnicked with them by the lake. Once, at least, he went with them to a party. He attended the synagogue services with them. And he took two or three of them off by themselves for special talks. He knew what

was in man, and he knew his twelve pupils thoroughly, knew their possibilities and their limitations, their strength and their weaknesses, their needs and their temptations.

A preacher with insight declares that the failure of many a sermon is attributable to the fact that it has little or no relation to the audience, and is practically an essay, when it should be a message spoken from one heart to another.

A Bible Class leader, who successfully taught eight Bible Class groups each week in the city of New York, told Mr. Clayton Sedgwick Cooper that the secret of his success lay not so much in the class hour as in his personal acquaintance with the men outside the class. The first thing he did to make his class successful was to arrange for an hour's conversation with each member of a class. His teaching and his discussion in the class hour were upon the basis of his personal knowledge of the needs, ambitions, temptations, and temperaments of his class members.

Is your teaching only the isolated period of the lesson hour, or is it a part of a larger fellowship between your pupils and you? A recently published outline of plans for an Epworth League group of young people states as their purpose the discovering of the possibilities of comradeship with one another and the Master. Is not this purpose yours?

His Teaching was Pupil-Centered, not Material-Centered

In discussions in regard to church schools we hear and read much about pupil-centered versus material-centered teaching. It is claimed that formerly the interest of the church school teacher centered in the Biblical material to be taught—as if he regarded his pupils as sponges that must absorb a certain amount of Scripture knowledge each week—whereas the interest of the present-day teacher is centered in his pupils, for he regards them as living, active persons whom he would help to growth not only in wisdom but in grace.

The latter was Jesus' way. We see him occupied, not in imparting subjects, but in teaching men.

A lesson truth may find you, perhaps, in a very different way from which it will find your pupils. Can you put yourself in their places and look at questions through their eyes? Dr. van Dyke, in Light My Candle, gives a commonplace but telling illustration along this line. You inquire of a man who has been many times over a certain road how far it is to such-and-such a place, and what turns in the road there are before reaching it. The chances are that he cannot tell the actual distance and that he will omit some important item in describing the route. Take him with you over the road, and he will guide you without hesitation. But ask him to tell you how to travel it for yourself—and that is another story. Most of us have this same kind of difficulty in communicating our religious experience to others, and Dr. van Dyke suggests two ways of gaining ability in this direction: (1) classify and organize our ideas so that they will be communicable; (2) put ourselves by sympathy in the other man's place so that we can speak to his requirements instead of meandering around in inadequate reminiscences of the way.

He Refused to Do his Pupils' Thinking for them

In the first place, the Master Teacher was always approachable. We cannot expect to have frank discussions of difficulties or troubles unless we have built up a friendly attitude. Jesus' listeners felt free to voice their difficulties and ask their questions. Indeed, he not only encouraged inquiry, but made inquiry necessary. And then he led them to answer their own questions, insisting always upon their forming their own judgments, for he refused to do their thinking for them. He was wont to meet a direct question with a counter query. "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" the rich young ruler questioned, and, "What is written in the law?" Jesus countered. "He stirred up in his followers' attitudes, aspirations, enthusiasms, principles. They would have to think through their problems and make the application to existing situations for themselves." And he commended correct thinking. To the scribe who rightly valued moral obligation above ceremonial practises, he said, "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God."

In your preparation of each lesson you will find it helpful to think out the questions which you will ask in class, or, better still, to write them down and thus impress them upon your memory. Such questions will be designed to draw out your pupils' thoughts, to lead them to tell of their problems, and to help them think out the solution of problems.

A class that sits silent while the teacher talks or lectures, or a class that merely responds, "Yes, Miss Smith," "No, Miss Smith," is getting little from the lesson period. The principle which pupils formulate for themselves becomes vital in their minds.

A leader among the Friends at Boston said with much satisfaction that in the previous three months twenty-seven people had taken part in their Sunday meetings, and added: "Wouldn't it be a shame if I, as minister, had done the whole thing, and denied these people the opportunity of participation?" Other churches do not follow this plan of the Friends, but certainly all church school classes should be meetings participated in by all members.

"Please, master," said ten-year-old Franz to Cizek, the artist of Vienna, "show me how to draw my horse's foot."

"Ah, my boy, it is your horse, not mine. Draw what you feel is right. But stay; perhaps you would like to run outside and see."

Franz ran out and watched a horse that was standing still and ran along after another one that was trotting. His eyes caught form and action. Breathless he returned and exclaimed, "Quick! My pencil!"

Cizek was following after the Master Teacher.

He Brought his Pupils to a Decision Regarding Himself

For a long time Jesus was content with the genuine loyalty of his followers, but the time came when they must no longer remain only vaguely conscious of his divinity. They must think out who their Master really was and what was their relation to him. For this he had labored and waited. Then in the neighborhood of Cæsarea Philippi he put them to the test, and they gave voice to their thought that they knew for a certainty he was the Christ.

After a Brahman student in Allahabad had read the Bible, and especially the life and teaching of Jesus, for over a year with an Oxford graduate, the latter said to him, "What do you think of Jesus Christ?" "I think that Jesus Christ was the greatest Man that ever lived," slowly the Hindu scholar answered. "I think" —still more slowly he continued—"yes, I know—he is my Savior."

The challenge of Browning's Kasskish reëchoes in our ears: "The very God! think, Abib; *dost thou think?"* Church school teachers who awaken in their pupils an interest in Jesus Christ, but fail to give them an opportunity to express their convictions in regard to him and his way of life, are not faithful followers of the Great Teacher. By giving expression to conviction it is deepened and strengthened.

He Knew the Scriptures

Jesus knew the Scriptures because he studied them. From his aptness of quotation one is warranted in believing that he knew them by heart. His familiarity with the Scriptures made him a master of the history of his people. "The way in which Jesus knew law, or history, or rhetoric, or mankind, was in the study of them. The reason he could teach was because he was prepared for teaching. His teaching was a draft upon the reservoir of stored up resources." As some one has said, one cannot imagine Jesus hurrying from a late breakfast to meet his pupils, and saying, "Let's see; what is the lesson about today?"

He Believed What he Taught

Sincerity breathes through every utterance of Jesus. His words are so powerful because spoken with full conviction. Borrowed beliefs, unbelieved utterances, have no power.

Several years ago in England a popular preacher was discoursing eloquently upon the power of prayer, when he suddenly stopped and passed his hands over his head as if in a mental fog. Then with a dazed look he said: "I do not know, my friends, whether you ever tried praying. For my part, I gave it up long ago as a bad job." He never preached again. His people spoke of the strange seizure he had in the pulpit, and willingly pensioned him.

What would be our words if we inadvertently uttered our real thoughts? Do our words about prayer carry weight because they come from our own experience? Do we ever say something while inwardly doubting its truth? If so, do not our pupils know it?

A preacher once said to an actor: "Why is it that you actors are able to move audiences by the ordinary and sometimes commonplace or trivial things you say, while we preachers handling great and eternal truths get often so little response?"

And the actor replied: "We actors speak our lines as though we believed them, and believed that what we have to say matters mightily. You preachers often proclaim the great truths of life and death as though you do not believe them, and as though it makes not a particle of difference what anyone does about them." Could not the actor have spoken these words to a few church school teachers? Said a young friend to me: "Mr. A. is a fine Bible scholar, but I do not care for him as a teacher. If he said in so many words that he does not expect us to profit from the lessons and does not particularly care whether we do or not, his words would not be plainer than are his attitude and manner of speaking." No one to whom spiritual truths are vitally true could teach in that way.

He Had a Definite Aim in All his Teaching

Philologus, the "Compleat Questioner" in Roger Ascham's quaint and discursive treatise on archery, asks:

"What mean you, when ye take so greate heade, to keep your standynge, to look on your marke so diligently, to cast up grasse diverse tymes and other things more? What would ye do than I pray you?"

Toxophilus: "Hit ye marke yf we could."

Philologus: "And doth every man go about to hit ye marke at every shoote?"

Toxophilus: "By my trothe I trow so, and as for my selfe I am sure I do."

Have you a mark at which to aim? And do you carefully aim? Or is the familiar line in the comic song occasionally illustrated in your teaching, "I don't know where I'm going, but I'm on my way"?

He Dealt with Life Experiences

A publisher observes that scarcely a month passes when fewer than a dozen books about Jesus are published, and he attributes this largely to the fact that a consideration of Jesus gives opportunity for a discussion, not only of the theological problems of his Person, office and character, but also of the widest possible range of questions of faith and conduct. Jesus did not stand apart from life. In fact, the implication of his whole life is that in common days and common deeds are life's theater, and in them lie life's opportunities and joys. He was genuinely interested in ordinary human concerns. Children and games, the daily cares of the household, the affairs of the field and the market,—about these he talked. Taking common objects and events of ordinary life, he showed the relation between the truths of religion and the facts of daily experience.

It is the claim of the Graded Lessons that they have shifted from the content-centered material of the Uniform Series to life experiences. But is the Uniform Series of lessons content-centered? They have to do with life experiences and should be so taught. Young people and adults alike eagerly discuss the problems of everyday life which the lesson texts suggest.

He Used Apt Illustrations to Enforce his Teaching

There is a fine Arab proverb which says, He is the best speaker who can turn the ear into an eye. Jesus did this. He made his truths luminous by his masterly use of stories, parables, figures of speech, and proverb-like sayings. His parables were about common things—the growing seed, the ripe harvest, the leaven, the net—but they were not commonplace. "If only you use illustrations finely, it does not matter so much how generously you use them."

You recall that remark of Alice in Wonderland—"What is the use of a book without pictures and conversations?" It is the remark of a child, but written by a man with a wise understanding of how to present a thought impressively.

"Suppose I begin to discourse to a number of children on some abstract truth," Dr. J. H. Jowett suggests. "Suppose I use no illustrations, no analogies, no anecdotes. Suppose I decline to enshrine the truth in a vision, or picture, or tale, and present it to them as a pure abstraction—what effect shall I produce? At the best, only a vague and stupid wonder.

"But, now, let us take the abstract truth and wrap it up in an illustration. Let it shine through the vesture of a story. Let it be embodied in a parable or a fairy-tale. What will then be the effect? Vague and fruitless wonder will immediately pass into vivid and pointed interest."

Dr. Jowett then considers the adult mind. He takes a definite abstract theme—courage—deals with it philosophically, and finds no impression made. Then he

puts it into a tale, tells the story of a courageous man—Livingstone—and shifting, indifferent wonder he finds changed into a keen and interested attention.

Whether your pupils are young children or young people or adults of any age, if you enforce your teaching by apt illustrations you will never have to ask, as Vergil did of Dante, "Wherefore so wanders thine understanding beyond its wont? or thy mind, where else is it gazing?"

The parables of Jesus as a teaching method will repay careful study. Note how they carry out three of the fundamental principles of education: (1) proceed from the concrete to the abstract; (2) proceed from the known to the unknown; (3) proceed from the particular to the general.

Note, too, that they do not point the moral. If you have ever sat by the seashore and looked into the shallow pools, you will have noticed the interesting sea-anemone. It throws out its tentacles in all directions in search of the food which is necessary for its growth. But put your finger upon it, and it draws in its tentacles and closes up tightly. Miss Huntley, the British Sunday-school expert, refers to the sea-anemone and asks: "Has not Nature provided the child with a similar means of protection? Tell him the story, show him the picture, speak to him in his own language, and he will open his mind widely and take in the food necessary for his development. But point the moral, and the child-mind immediately resents the intrusion and takes the only means it can to protect itself."

His Message Was Dynamic

Read A. B. Bruce's book entitled The Training of the Twelve, which shows how important in Jesus' mind was that training. The Gospels often record his leaving the multitude that ever followed him and going apart with his disciples to teach them, for he intended the disciples to become apostles. By his teaching and by his example he so transformed that small group of Galileans that they in turn started the transformation of the world.

After the disciples had been in training for a considerable time, he sent them forth on a preaching and healing mission that they might learn by doing. They returned full of enthusiasm. "A thing has not been learned [for life's purposes] until it has got over into life and to some extent remade it. Jesus understood this. He trained his disciples in creative self-activity. In turn this activity, successfully engaged in, produced enthusiasm, renewed interest, and increased capacity leading to further activity and growth."

Some one complains that while the world is crying out for Christian activity, the men's Bible classes have been giving it Christian discussion. The fault is not so much with the Christian discussion as with the fact that the class interests stop there, that there are no Christian activities which the members are promoting, no Christian service on which they are bent, no application of Christian principles to social and industrial life.

"The Scripture leads back to the will and mind of God and it leads out to the life of man. It is not an end in itself, not a world of thought in itself. It is the carrier of truth from God to man. And the expository teacher must keep both the living God and the actual everyday man in view continually or he will find his teaching moving round and round in a circle of abstractions and liberalisms."

You know the word of Augustine, *"Veritas pateat, veritas placeat, veritas moveat."* Make the truth plain, make the truth pleasing, make the truth moving! There is a verse in Habbakuk which is often wrongly quoted as though it read, "Make it plain . . . so that he who runs may read." Altogether different is the wise man's counsel: "Make it plain . . . that he may run that readeth it." "Christianity is not an idea in the air, but feet on the ground, going God's way."

He Taught by his Example

Some one has pointedly said that "the life of the teacher is the life of his teaching." This was true of the Great Teacher, and is true of us in a measure. There is only one instance recorded of Jesus' giving his disciples a formal example and bidding them follow its spirit (John 13.1-17), but his whole life among them was an example. "Jesus gave the example of living his own life at the utmost for the Highest. And that is how example is best given," writes Alfred E. Garvie. "It is the spirit, the motive, and the purpose of his life to which the disciples must seek to be conformed: and that conformity will grow spontaneously."

So we are under the moral pressure of living on the highest level to which we can attain. We are under the goad to do our best, to make ourselves square with

our words. The effort is bound to bear fruit in better impulses, nobler aspirations, higher attainments. "I will preach no more gospel than I am living," is the resolve made by Robert E. Speer.

He Was the Great Optimist

As often as I read the life of Christ in the Gospels, I am impressed anew by his wonderful optimism regarding the result of his mission. He trained only a small group of men, but he trusted them to carry on his work, and believed that eventually the whole world would be brought to a knowledge of him.

"No pictured likeness of my Lord have I;
He carried no record of his ministry
On wood or stone.
He left no sculptured tomb nor parchment dim,
But trusted for all memory of him
Men's hearts alone."

LESSONS FROM REPRESENTATIVE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

An older member of a family had been discoursing about the practise of certain virtues, when a fourteen-year-old boy frankly spoke his mind, as told in a long article in The Youth's Companion.

"It's no use spieling to kids. They don't listen. You've got to show 'em. I suppose I've had to listen to a bushel of talk about being humane, and I don't remember any of it. But lots of times I've noticed old Uncle John Tyler walking up the long hills. 'What do you do that for?' I asked him one day. 'Don't it make you tired and lame?' 'Well, Fred,' said he, 'I've got a pretty heavy load today, and Old Dan's legs are getting old as well as mine. When we get to the top of the hill I can get on and rest, but he has to keep going clear to the Corners.' He showed me what being good to animals is like, and I can't seem to forget it.

"Now father expects me to pass my exams and to attend to my business, whatever it is. He never says much about it. But ever since I can remember he has gone down to the office just about as regular as the sun rises. And when he gets back he works in the garden or does whatever else there is to be done. So when I start to do anything, before I know it I'm thinking, 'Father will be disappointed if I don't carry this thing through.'

"That's what I mean. Just a lot of talk doesn't amount to a thing. Kids don't even listen; you've got to show 'em!"

Fred's thought is voiced in these words of a successful educator: "High purposes are the by-product in a man's soul of the character he admires. We cannot, by any mere abstract exhortation to be good, affect the deep and secret purposes that weigh with youth, as he shapes his conduct from day to day: but we can inspire his soul with examples of manhood that will secretly and increasingly purify his motives and determine his choice. We cannot manipulate his will by either force or command, but we can intensify his admiration for courage, honor, reverence and faith, in whomsoever he may find them." And from admiration and aspiration to imitation is but a step.

We are told that "the chief business of the church school teacher is to give pictures of human life in relation to God," and here in the Third and Fourth Quarters we have these pictures ready to hand. There is an amazing variety of types in these portrait galleries, and in their lives are portrayed virtues which make their own appeal. In the Third Quarter we have Abraham the adventurer, the man of faith; Jacob the shrewd, the trickster; Moses the wise, the liberator; Deborah the brave, the strong-hearted; Ruth the loyal; Hannah the godly mother; Saul the unstable; Jonathan and David the noble friends; Amos the fearless servant of God; Josiah the royal reformer; Jeremiah the great; and Jonah the narrow nationalist. And then in the last Quarter our characters are Zacharias and Elisabeth and their pious Jewish home; Mary, the Mother of Jesus; Simeon and Anna, with the insight of the pure in heart; Peter, who passed from moral weakness to strength; Thomas, the honest doubter; the believing centurion; the rich young ruler who refused a life of sacrificial service; Zacchæus, the publican, whose life was suddenly changed; Stephen, who boldly stood up for Christ; Paul, the Pharisee, who became a great Christian; and Timothy, who profited from religious training at home.

Much like a series of moving pictures these lessons are, and somewhat similar the impressions they make to that of beautiful landscapes which one would enjoy

longer on the screen, but which are quickly whisked away for other scenes. You have no opportunity of dealing adequately with any of these representative men and women of the Bible; yet a true impression of the lesson of each life can be given.

You recall how the leading character in Walter Scott's story of Old Mortality goes from one graveyard to another, and with hammer and chisel carves deeper the names of the old Scottish Covenanters which were in danger of becoming illegible in the weatherworn stones. Somewhat similar is your task in this course of lessons. The great men and women of Bible times should not become erased from the minds of your pupils. Where those lives show nobility, they will help your pupils to be noble; where they show ignobly, they will prove a warning to them. In the earnest contemplation of the traits of character of great and good men and women, one is himself ennobled.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

The Sources of the Gospel

According to the Early Fathers (those in authority in the Early Church), the earliest written record of Christ's life was a collection of his sayings called the Logia (Sayings, Discourses) of Matthew, written in Aramaic, the Hebrew dialect spoken in Palestine in the time of Christ. Eusebius quotes from Papias (about 140 A.D.) that "Matthew composed the Logia in the Hebrew dialect, but each one interpreted them as he was able."

The earliest manuscripts of the Gospel according to Matthew that have come down to us are in Greek, and date from the fourth century, some three hundred years after the Gospel was written. Most scholars believe that in these Greek manuscripts (of which our Gospel is a translation), the Gospel according to Mark was used as the framework and into it were inserted other authentic records, written or oral, including the Aramaic Matthew or Logia.

The Writer

The Heading "The Gospel According to Matthew" may mean either the Gospel written by Matthew or the Gospel written by one whose chief authority was Matthew.

Matthew was a Palestinian Jew, and at the time when called by Jesus to be his disciple was a publican, the official tax-collector at Capernaum of the Roman Empire. His name occurs in all the lists of the apostles, though Mark and Luke give his other name of Levi. Being an apostle, he was an eye-witness of the events his Gospel narrates. Aside from the account of his call and the reference to the banquet which he gave his Master (Luke 5.27-30), nothing further is definitely known about him. Tradition says that he preached fifteen years in Judea and then in Ethiopia, Persia, Media and Parthia. Eusebius (270-340 A.D.) writes that "Matthew, who had at first preached to the Hebrews, when he was about to go to other peoples, committed his Gospel in writing in his native tongue, and thus compensated those whom he was obliged to leave for the loss of his presence."

Whether Matthew the publican wrote the original Greek Matthew or only the Aramaic Matthew cannot now be determined.

When and for Whom Written

Matthew's Gospel was written for the Jews, and it is therefore fittingly placed first; to the Jews first and then to the Gentiles is the order of divine revelation. It takes for granted that the course of events is known to its hearers, and it contains special Jewish phrases such as "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," "the holy city." It gives those teachings which have for the Jews a particular significance: here only do we hear of Jesus' words concerning the permanence of the Law (5.17-19); the limitation of the mission of Jesus and his apostles to the Jews (10.6; 15.24); Jesus' severest words denouncing the Pharisees (15.13; 21.28-32; and chapter 23); and his declaration of the nation's downfall (8.11, 12; 21.43; 22.7; 27.25). It has been called the ultimatum of Jehovah to his people; Recognize Jesus as your Messiah, or accept him as your Judge!

The date of the Gospel cannot be more definitely determined than that it was written later than the Gospel of Mark, which is assigned to the years between 60 and 70 A.D. Irenæus (first century) says: "Matthew among the Hebrews published a Gospel in their own dialect, when Peter and Paul were preaching in Rome and founding the Church."

Its Aim

No Gospel aims to be a complete biography of Jesus. From the sources at command each Evangelist selected and arranged the material best suited for the purpose he had in writing it.

Matthew's main purpose was to convince his readers that Jesus is the Messiah. The Old Testament closes with the chosen nation looking for their long-promised King and Messiah. Matthew's Gospel shows that Jesus was that King, the one who fulfilled ancient prophecy—the Messiah. It is the Gospel of the Fulfilment: what Isaiah and Jeremiah and Zechariah and Daniel said about the King and his Kingdom are here noted as fulfilled in Jesus. The phrase "that it might be fulfilled" occurs many times, and there are sixty-five quotations from the old Testament.

Matthew's object was not only to give trustworthy proof that he whom the Jews had rejected is really the Messiah of their nation, but also that he is the Messiah of the world. The Gospel has a world-wide outlook. As Professor Earnest D. Burton, writing in The Biblical World, says: "From the assertion in its first verse that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of David, the son of Abraham, to the commission which, in its closing paragraph, this Christ, now risen from the dead, gives to his apostles to make disciples of all nations, the book is dominated by the purpose of convincing Jewish Christians that the religion of Jesus was not merely the Judaism of the temple plus a belief in Jesus as the Messiah, but a world-religion, freed from all bonds and restrictions that were local and national."

Contents Peculiar to Matthew

Jesus' ideals for living are given more completely by Matthew than by any other Evangelist. More than half the book consists of the teachings of Jesus.

There are five great addresses in this Gospel: The Sermon on the Mount, setting forth the true righteousness, the weightiest utterance in the world, chapters 5 to 7; the address to the disciples when Jesus sent them forth on their mission, chapter 10; the seven parables that illustrate the nature and the principles of the Kingdom of Heaven, chapter 13; the discourses on humility, forgiveness, etc., of chapter 18; and the warning against Pharisaism, the lament over Jerusalem, and the parables of the judgment, chapters 23 to 25.

Its Arrangement

Matthew gives a simple, truthful, often argumentative, record of the words and deeds of Jesus. He does not give all the facts of Jesus' life essential to a complete portrait. Nor does he present his life from the historical standpoint; he omits his Judean ministry and gives many events out of their chronological order, grouping them by topics rather than by time. It is probable that the teachings of Jesus which are presented as one great discourse, to which we have given the name of "The Sermon on the Mount," were spoken on different occasions, as reported in Luke's Gospel. Godet compares Luke to a botanist who prefers to contemplate a flower in the very place of its birth and in the midst of its natural surroundings, while Matthew is like the gardener who for some special objects puts together large and magnificent bouquets.

Its General Outline

I. The Genealogy, Birth and Infancy of Jesus. Chapters 1 and 2.
II. The Preparation for the Public Ministry. 3.1 to 4.11.
III. The Ministry in Galilee. 4.12 to 18.35.
IV. The Journey through Perea to Jerusalem. Chapters 19 and 20.
V. The Last Week. Chapters 21 to 27.
VI. The Resurrection. Chapter 28.

Its Value

Even Renan terms this "The most important book that has ever been written." Robert Louis Stevenson rightly says in Books Which Have Influenced Me: "I believe it would startle and move any one, if he could make a certain effort of imagination, and read it freshly like a book, not droningly and dully like a portion of the Bible." Ruskin in St. Mark's Rest writes: "The Gospel which the publican wrote for us, with its perfect Sermon on the Mount, and mostly more harmonious and gentle fullness in places where St. Luke is formal, St. John mysterious, and St. Mark brief—this Gospel According to St. Matthew, I should think, if we had to choose one out of all the books in the Bible for a prison or a desert friend, would be the one we should keep."

AS NAZARETH LOOKS TODAY

FIRST QUARTER

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM: STUDIES IN MATTHEW

(First Half of a Six Months' Course)

Aim: 1. To present a clear and comprehensive view of the entire Gospel of Matthew. 2. To keep in mind the Messianic character of the Gospel. 3. To observe the well-balanced relationship between Jesus' ministry of teaching and his ministry of mercy. 4. To develop faith in Jesus as the Son of God. 5. To indicate the way to complete Christian living.

LESSON I—JANUARY 5

CHILDHOOD OF JESUS

GOLDEN TEXT: Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins. Matthew 1.21

LESSON Matthew 1.1 to 2.23

DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 11.1-9

MATTHEW 2.10 And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. 11 And they came into the house and saw the young child with Mary his mother; and they fell down and worshipped him; and opening their treasures they offered unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. 12 And being warned *of God* in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

13 Now when they were departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I tell thee: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. 14 And he arose and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt; 15 and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt did I call my son.

16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the Wise-men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the male children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had exactly learned of the Wise-men. 17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, saying,

18 A voice was heard in Ramah,
Weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children;
And she would not be comforted,
because they are not.

19 But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, 20 Arise and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead that sought the young child's life. 21 And he arose and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judæa in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither; and being warned *of God* in a dream, he withdrew into the parts of Galilee, 23 and came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets, that he should be called a Nazarene.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS, 1.1-17.

II. THE BIRTH OF JESUS, 1.18-25.

III. THE VISIT OF THE WISE MEN, 2.1-12. It was in the days of Herod the king that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea. This was the Herod known to history as Herod the Great, whose reign lasted from 37 to 4 B.C. When Jesus was born, Wise-men from the east came to Jerusalem to seek him. These men belonged to the priestly or learned class famous among the Medes, Persians and Babylonians as astronomers, astrologers, physicians, soothsayers, and interpreters of dreams. "The science of the Magi had little resemblance to modern astronomy, but it led them to the cradle of the Lord. Kepler, who followed after many centuries, was led by a nobler science of the stars to a higher adoration." The tradition that there were three Wise-men (named Casper, Melchior and Balthazar) may have had its origin in the fact that their gifts were of three kinds, verse 11. They had seen in the east a remarkable star, the star of him who was born King of the Jews, they declared, and they had come to worship him. "Whatsoever Wise-men they were before, now they begin to be wise men indeed when they set themselves to inquire after Christ," is Matthew Henry's comment. According to Kepler's theory and calculation, the star was a conjunction of planets that shone like one star.

"Now the spiritual meaning of this is exactly the same, whether or not we believe the star of the ancient story to have been an actual physical body that appeared among the other actual stars, or whether it was only a vision kindled before the souls of men to whom the unseen became visible and real. If the actual star was there, the Wise-men saw it when others did not, because their eyes alone were gazing where they thought God's sign would be. If the star was only a vision, then they saw it and other men did not, because their souls were gazing when others did not gaze. And the result was the same thing in either case. It was the longing of their souls that made them look, and it was the sensitiveness of their souls that made them see.

"And so it is in these days of ours when we do not look for miraculous stars in the skies above our heads. Still, none the less truly, the stars of God may dawn in those skies of conscience which are above our hearts. If we have a longing to find God, then we must have the watchful spirit that looks for his guiding signs. We must be alert each day to discover the beacon of some new truth, some new and shining ideal appearing among the old, familiar order of the fixed and usual duties, which beckon us to a venture and a consecration better than we have known before" (W. Russell Bowie).

Herod was in Jerusalem, and when the question of the Wise-men reached his ears he was troubled, for he feared a pretender to his throne. The people also were troubled, we are told; probably they feared to have Herod angered, for he was cruel and unscrupulous. Josephus says that two years before this, Herod had ordered the slaughter of leading Pharisees because of his jealous fear of them. Later he had slain those who prophesied that the throne would soon pass from him and his line. "The steps of his throne were wet with the blood of his best-loved wife, his sons, his benefactors, and of the flower of the nation, murdered to make it secure," writes Dr. Cunningham Geikie. "Like William the Conqueror, or Henry VIII, or Alexander the Great, or Nero, or Tiberius, his character had grown dark in his later years, and now, in his old age, he sat alone in his new palace, amidst splendor of architecture greater, if possible, than that of the temple, lonely, hated, and hating, his subjects waiting impatiently, in veiled rebellion, for his death."

Calling together the chief priests and scribes, who would be familiar with the prophecies, Herod inquired of them where the Christ should be born. The priests were the officers of the temple who offered the sacrifices. The scribes were the successors of the prophets of Old Testament times. Theirs was the duty of mastering and administering the Torah (the Mosaic Law), and thus their positions were both educational and judicial. All their work as scholars, preachers, lawyers and magistrates was given gratuitously; their proud position was deemed sufficient reward.

"In Bethlehem of Judea," was the answer Herod received, "for thus it is written through the prophet." See Micah 5.2. The quotation here given in Matthew is freely paraphrased.

Herod next summoned the Wise-men to a private interview and from them learned the exact time of the star's appearing. He wished to know the probable age of the Child, to make sure of his death afterwards, evidently holding that the

star's appearing and the Child's birth synchronized. Then he directed the men to Bethlehem, after bidding them return to Jerusalem to let him know the result of their search. He, too, would worship the Babe, he declared.

"Hateful to me as are the gates of hell,
Is he, who hiding one thing in his heart,
Utters another" (Homer).

As the Wise-men went on their way to Bethlehem, the star went before them: a poetical way of saying that the star guided them to Jesus. This and verse ten indicate that the star had not been visible all the time, and its reappearance was unexpected to them. They were led to the house where was the young Child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him, paying homage to him in the oriental manner of prostrating themselves before him.

"That Babe so fair in manger bare
Is God's own Son, and here has come
To seek and save a guilty world."

Some one asked Sunder Singh, a great Christian of India, what the difference was between the oriental and the occidental Christian. He replied: "When Wise-men came from the East to Bethlehem they came to adore the Infant Savior, to worship him. I have sometimes wondered if the Wise-men had come from the West, from America, what they would have done. I think they would have organized a committee. You of the West need us of the East, for we emphasize the spiritual; and we need you, for we lack in the practical things."

Then the Wise-men presented to the Babe gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. See Light from Oriental Life.

"Star of the East! show us the way
In wisdom undefiled
To seek that manger out and lay
Our gifts before the Child—
To bring our hearts and offer them
Unto our King in that Bethlehem!" (Eugene Field).

A dream warned the Wise-men not to return to Herod, and they went back to their country another way.

"As the Magi were interpreters of dreams, this method of divine revelation was especially appropriate. It is part of God's loving revelation to mankind to make his revelations to different ages, races and individuals by those channels through which they are accustomed to expect them" (Dummelow).

"The angels' song has passed away, the hillside glow has gone;
The guiding star no more shines out, from East no Wise-men come;
But still to earth our Savior's birth
Brings joy and peace that never cease,
To wise men, shepherds, people all."

IV. THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT, 2.13-15. A dream warned Joseph to save the Child from Herod by escaping with him and his mother into Egypt. Egypt was beyond Herod's jurisdiction, and there the family remained until Herod's death, a few months later. That it might be fulfilled, Matthew observes, which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt did I call my Son. Of course it is not meant that Jesus was carried into Egypt *because* Hosea predicted it, but that his being taken there did fulfil, as Matthew saw, that prediction. In its original setting, the words "my son" refer to the nation, not to the Christ, but Matthew was a Jewish Christian, trained in the Old Testament Scriptures, and he took delight in finding in the history of his people a foreshadowing of the life of Christ, and therefore he applied the passage directly to Christ as the rabbis would have done. It is God who is speaking in the eleventh chapter of Hosea and saying that after the Hebrew people had long been slaves in Egypt he had led them out into the promised land. "Matthew finds in the experience of Jesus another illustration of how God acts. He does not say that Hosea is thinking of Jesus. All he says is that words written centuries before are capable of holding new and larger meanings, and that the experiences of the olden times have been repeated on a higher level and with new significance. Just as God, centuries before, brought his

son, the Hebrew people, out of Egypt, so now again he is bringing Jesus, his Son, from Egypt into Galilee" (C. E. Jefferson).

V. THE SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS, 2.16-18. Herod sent his soldiers to murder every babe under two years of age in Bethlehem and round about: "as well might he have attempted to cut a mountain of adamant asunder as cut the chain of divine purposes."

Matthew here recalls Jeremiah 31.15 and declares that now was fulfilled or re-enacted that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and she would not be comforted, because they are not." When Jeremiah uttered those words he was not foreseeing Herod's cruel slaughter of the children of Bethlehem but thinking of the long train of exiles halted at Ramah, a few miles north of Bethlehem, among them Jeremiah himself in chains (Jer. 40.1), where the weak and aged were put to death before the caravan proceeded on its way to Assyria. He pictures Rachel, Jacob's beloved wife, the mother of Joseph and Benjamin, looking out from her tomb near by and mourning over the sad fate of her descendants. Rachel was to the Hebrew fancy a mother for Israel in all time. The Expositors' Greek Testament quotes from the Midrash to show the imaginative place which she holds in Rabbinical literature: "Why did Jacob bury Rachel on the way to Ephratah, or Bethlehem? Because he foresaw that exiles would at some future time pass that way, and he buried her there that she might pray for them." Just as mothers centuries before this had bewailed the death of their children, so mothers in the days of Herod wept over the death of their children and would not be comforted: the two experiences were similar, and Matthew links them together.

"We speak of Herod as a monster of iniquity, but he is not unique. He is only one example of a constantly recurring type. The employer who subordinates the health of his workers to his profits, the emperor who harnesses his people to dreams of aggression, the landlord who receives rent without securing sanitation, the mother who marries her daughter for money —all these are guilty in their degree of Herod's sin; nor is there any evidence that a child two years old in England today has a greater chance of life than a child of that age in Judea. We do not issue edicts of death, but we are careless, and the percentage remains" (P. Whitwell Wilson).

VI. THE RETURN TO NAZARETH UPON THE DEATH OF HEROD, 2.19-23.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

We saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him, verse 2. In the East the people believed in a great variety of gods—good, bad, and indifferent; but the theologians in one God, of whom the popular deities were manifestations or representatives. All these Wise-men pretended to seek—some really did seek—to ascertain the will of their God. They differed from the Hebrew prophets in one important respect; the Hebrew prophets sought for the voice of God in their souls; "the word of God came to me" was their common formula. The Magi, or Wise-men, sought for indications of the divine will in various material phenomena; those of Persia, in the stars. This belief that the stars have for man a divine message prevailed even in Christendom until the science of astronomy destroyed it.

In the first century of the Christian era there was a widespread expectation throughout the Eastern world that a Deliverer from the woes under which mankind was groaning would erelong appear. Confucius in China had prophesied such a Deliverer, and it is said that a deputation of his followers going forth in search of him were the means of introducing Buddhism into China. Zoroaster in Persia had foretold to his followers the coming of such a world-Savior. It would be quite natural for the Wise-men of his land to look for the fulfillment of his prophecy and to inquire of the stars when and where the promised Deliverer would be found. I wonder what they thought when they found a babe born of peasant parents, unheralded and unwelcomed in his native land. The narrator of the story does not tell us. He only tells us that they offered to the uncrowned and unentitled prince the gifts they had brought with them and then departed into their own country.—Lyman Abbott.

They offered unto him gifts, verse 11. It was customary in the East to approach kings and princes with a gift in the hand. Even formal visits among friends were

preceded by the presentation of gifts; the refusal to accept them was received as a mark of enmity. When Jacob returned from Paddan-Aram and sent his presents to Esau, who had come to meet him, he was anxious about their acceptance. The Queen of Sheba brought Solomon spices, gold and precious stones.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Between Nehemiah and Christ

During the year which has just ended we followed the history of the Old Testament from the times of Isaiah to those of Nehemiah. With the Book of Nehemiah the Old Testament history closes. Between that history and the beginning of the New Testament four hundred years intervene of which the Bible gives no account. They were dark ages in which men fought against tyranny and dreamed dreams of a coming kingdom, and told their dreams in the "Tracts for bad times," as the Apocalypses are called.

For a century after the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, Judah remained a dependency of the Persian Empire, most of the time under the direct authority of the satrap of Syria. Then the Greeks under Alexander the Great pushed eastward and conquered all the countries through which they passed, crossing the Euphrates in 331 B.C. and capturing the Persian Empire the year following. After Alexander's death Palestine fell to the lot of the Ptolemies (of Egypt). In 220 B.C. Antiochus the Great gained Palestine for Syria, but the next year it reverted to Egypt again. In 199 B.C. he wrested it once more from Egypt and permanently attached it to Syria. During this period the head of the Jewish community was the high priest, assisted by a council known as the Sanhedrin.

When in 168 B.C., Antiochus IV attempted to force upon the Jews both Greek culture and religion, commanding that altars to Zeus be erected throughout the land and in the temple at Jerusalem, the Maccabæan Revolt ensued. After many years of warfare Jewish independence was recognized in 135 B.C. "Never since Uzziah had paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser III in 737 B.C., unless it was for a few years in the reign of Josiah, had the Jews been politically free. It seemed like a new birth to the nation, and it stimulated the natural genius and devotion in all directions." The Hasmonæan dynasty lasted from 135 to 63, when Pompey (of Rome) captured Jerusalem and the Jews lost their independence for ever.

From that time on Palestine was under Roman rule. Augustus was Emperor of Rome and Herod the Great was King of the Jews at the time of the birth of Christ.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Bethlehem is six miles southeast of Jerusalem. The Wise-men came from the east and whether from Babylonia or Persia, their journey to Jerusalem, where they had their interview with Herod, must have consumed many weeks. As they returned from Bethlehem without passing through Jerusalem, they went northeastward to Jericho and the Jordan (possibly southward to Hebron and Idumea) and then eastward to their country.

The traditional birthplace of Jesus is a grotto in a crypt underneath the Church of the Nativity. The oldest part of this church was originally built, it is claimed, as early as the time of Constantine, in the fourth century. It was restored in the time of Justinian. The place visited by the Wise-men was not the place of the manger, but the temporary abiding place of the family, for their coming was some little time after the birth of Jesus.

To *Nazareth* among the hills of Lower Galilee Jesus was brought from Egypt, and there he lived until he began his public ministry. It is sixty-five miles north of Jerusalem and seventeen miles west of the Sea of Galilee.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Ten years ago we had a course of thirteen lessons from the Gospel of Matthew. Since then in our studies of the life of Christ we have had various excerpts from this Gospel, but no continuous study of this book. Now for half a year all our lessons are from Matthew. Your pupils have a fine opportunity to become thoroughly familiar with this Gospel from beginning to end. Encourage them to read carefully the entire lesson each week, not merely the printed verses, for in this way the entire Gospel will be covered. Let them see your own enthusiasm for this course and lead them to realize that they cannot afford to miss a single lesson. From time to time

in the older classes dictate portions of what is said about Matthew in our Introduction, for your pupils to copy in their notebooks.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE QUEST OF THE MAGI

Beginning the Lesson

The expectation based on the predictions of their prophets, of the advent of a great king who should be their national deliverer, had for centuries filled the minds and hearts of the Jews. In the days of Herod, "many were persuaded that it was contained in the ancient books of their priests," according to Tacitus, "that at that very time the east should prevail, and that some should proceed from Judea and possess the dominion." Jews of the Dispersion made known this expectation wherever they met, and it may have been from them that it reached the Wise-men. And it may have been that the predictions ascribed to their own prophet Zoroaster which pointed to three deliveries, led these Wise-men to see the greatest of the three in the King of the Jews.

Whatever prophecy made them expect a great king, however mistaken their idea of his kingship, and however false may have been their astrological notions which led them to watch the stars for one that announced his birth, these all aroused the Wise-men to make their long pilgrimage to Bethlehem and lay their tributes at the feet of the Infant Jesus, the spiritual King of the world. God used their imperfect knowledge to make known the perfect truth.

In this visit of the Magi to the young Child, the Christian church has seen a deep significance, for the visit not only testified to the kingly character of Jesus, but symbolized as well the coming to him of the Gentile world. It is the Epiphany, or "Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles."

The Wise-men as Types

If we would understand the greatness of our Gospels, we must read them with something more than the same sense with which we read the records of earth's common prose. They are a gift to the imagination. They are steeped in the glory of poetry and romance, and never can they be fully read until we bring to them the heart which is ready to understand their poetry and their immortal symbolism. Is it not true for us as we read the story of the Wise-men that something within us rises up to say—this is not the closed record of an ancient fact? This is the representation in life of an eternal truth which reënacts itself in my own soul in those great moments when the soul is most aware of life and God. So from afar my feet press home to him. So through the shadows of discontent and incompleteness the eyes of the soul's desire search for the beacon that would lead me to the Lord of Life.

The Wise-men represented for their time, and for all times, that which is true and aspiring in all the religions of the earth. They themselves were followers of Zoroaster, the prophet of what was in its conception perhaps the noblest and most imaginative among the religions outside of Israel in pre-Christian times. They took the fire as their symbol of God because it seemed the purest and the most mysterious of all created things. They worshiped before the sacred flame which burned upon their altars. They gazed into the heavens and saw there the mightier fires of the distant stars, and bowed down before them as men who would read in them the great, still thoughts of God. Out of the darkness of the earth, with its sin and wrong, they were yearning for a diviner light which should come to men with purity and strength and righteousness.

And so through all the world the spirits of men are seeking for the light. Still they bow down before the altars which enshrine for them the symbol of something which dimly they desire, yet know not of. And as out of the heart of the East the Wise-men turned to Bethlehem to find their Savior, so out of the heart of all humanity—seeking, aspiring, groping, sometimes failing—men turn to that same Christ, if only they can learn the way to find him. He was born in Israel, but it was not to Israel that his salvation should be limited. From the first it was meant that his claim should be upon the world, and that in him the world should find satisfaction for its universal hunger.

And now we shall go on to the further and more personal consideration. We shall take the Wise-men as the type not only of that search of the soul after God which may be found in every race and country, but of that desire also which we are immediately conscious of in the moments of our own highest living.

Here were men seeking something finer than anything they had found. It is possible for men to be content to live just upon the chance disclosures and the chance satisfactions which life brings them in the passing days—to spend their time catching the driftwood which the current draws to their particular standing-place. But it was not so with these Wise-men. They were of those who cannot rest until they have found what this great river of life means, and what the ocean is into whose vast wideness it is flowing. Their souls launched out upon the tides, seeking beyond the narrow currents of the world's appearances the unfathomable reality of the greatness of God.—Condensed from The Road of the Star, by W. Russell Bowie.

Led by the Star to Worship the Savior King

Is your star leading you to Bethlehem? The question has peculiar significance addressed to the modern representatives of the Magi, the educated classes of the Occident. It is in cultured circles that one often finds the greatest indifference to Jesus and the densest ignorance of his person and work. University graduates hold aloof from the Son of God in such large numbers that the question is mooted from time to time just what the tendency of the educational world really is. Is present-day science hostile to Jesus? Does the philosophy of the modern schools extinguish the light of the star of Bethlehem? Does the observation of phenomena dim the eyes and chill the heart? Does a passion for investigation and the love of research unfit one to kneel at the feet of the King? These are questions to ponder over at Christmas time. We know that certain scholars of the East, by studying the phenomena of nature, were led by their study to the Christ in Bethlehem. Why should not study always, if conducted in the right spirit, lead the soul to him in whom all things consist? If the characteristic feature of the modern scientific spirit is docility, a willingness to study the facts and follow where they lead, may we not confidently expect that the world of scientific culture will sooner or later find itself casting its gold and frankincense and myrrh at the feet of the King? The passion for knowledge, which is the peculiar glory of our age, must lead men at last to the feet of the Teacher who calmly declares, "I am the truth."—Charles E. Jefferson, in The World's Christmas Tree.

Our Attitude towards the Modern Magi

The news that the Magi were searching for a new-born king of the Jewish people created alarm and suspicion. All official Jerusalem was disquieted. Personal and natural interests suggested both to king and priests that the Magi's investigation might well be dangerous to their authority and to the welfare of the people. Perhaps the new king would challenge the old king's authority, and who knew what his attitude would be to the existing religious organizations? There would likely have to be a reorientation of their outlook upon the problems they liked to think they had solved, for new ideas and discoveries always lead to changes in accustomed ways of thinking and living. The uncertainty of the whole situation filled the officials of the church and court with hostility and ill-will. So official Jerusalem preferred that things should stay as they were, and they resented the intrusion of these heathen adventurers, and they scoffed at the suggestion of their superior knowledge.

Does not the present disturbed condition of the Christian churches parallel the unrest and uneasiness of official Jerusalem after the Magi had revealed the purpose and intention of their adventure? In the hitherto little known subjects of comparative religion and folk-lore, the extensive explorations of scholarship have laid bare an astounding wealth of knowledge which has necessitated a readjustment of the Christian outlook. The historical method of criticism revealing new views of the origin and purpose of the various writings of the Bible and of the beginnings of Christianity has made great changes in traditional belief, although the scholars claim that much that has been taken away has been débris, and that now there is possible a nobler and loftier building. But in many hearts there is a great fear and much unhappiness, for there is always an element of pain in the birth of new ideas, and this is especially true in so conservative a subject as religion. Moreover, much of the pain that has been experienced by sincerely Christian men has been needlessly and ruthlessly caused. Some men claiming to be scholars have seemed to enjoy a cruel pleasure in violently uprooting old and cherished beliefs.

What, then, should be the attitude of the Christian man to the adventures of our modern Magi? In the first place, he will insist that they be religious men. In the second place, he will insist that they be reverent. For humility is the pre-

requisite of neither scholarship nor religion, but, wherever we find the inquiring mind reverently seeking goodness through truth and endeavoring to make both contributory to the beauty of life we should welcome it as we would a friend. There are two attitudes to new knowledge which must awaken our enmity—a cowardice that dare not face new truth, and an arrogance that thinks it knows all truth. But wherever the inquiring minds of our twentieth century Magi are directed by the spirit of reverence and humility, we should do well to welcome their courageous devotion to the truth as they see it, and sympathetically to examine their discoveries. Then we shall come to our own conclusions, not through prejudice and preference, but through personal investigation and through open-minded study, for no truth, be it new or old, can be truth for us until we have experienced it in a vital way that satisfies both head and heart.

Christianity, then, should be sympathetic towards the reverent investigations of the inquiring mind, nor need there be any fear that these will cause any embarrassment to the essentials of religion.

Loyalty to the spirit of Jesus will be our only orthodoxy, disloyalty to the spirit of Jesus our only heresy. Then will our Christian groups offer a welcome hospitality to all who seek the things of Christ, and there will be no quarreling about the methods of the search. Perfect love for God and man will cast out fear and distrust of either. Therefore, whether or no we accept the findings of the Magi, shall we not at least give them a courteous reception and an attentive hearing?—Condensed from an article in The New Outlook, by Arnold Newell Hoath.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The birth and childhood of Jesus. See Chapter II of The Jesus of History by T. R. Glover ($1.50); Chapters IV to VI of Sermons for the Church Year, by Phillips Brooks ($2.00).

2. Modern slaughter of innocents, in factories, in sweat-shop work, in work in tenements, in berry fields, etc.

Questions for Pupils to Look up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Why did Jesus wait till thirty years of age before beginning his great work? 2. What was the meaning to Jesus of his baptism? 3. How must the report of his temptations have been given? 4. For what purpose may he have told them? 5. What is the meaning of each of the temptations? 6. In what way does the first temptation come to us? 7. The second? 8. The third? 9. Do temptations come less frequently as one grows older?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

HOW THE CHILD-KING WAS RECEIVED

Beginning the Lesson

You all know the beautiful Story of the Star: where do we find it? Who will tell it?

"The Wise-men traveled in caravan with the cumbrous but complete equipment of tents and spare camels and horses and armed servants, all made necessary by the long marches through interminable desert stretches and robber-infested country. From the remote East they came, and after long weeks of travel they reached Judea. Little wonder that it made a stir when their stately caravan approached the Holy City, on the road from Jericho, and moved down the steep slope of Olivet and then up to the city gate."

News of their coming and of their errand reached the ears of King Herod. Why do you suppose he was told? Why did the news disturb him? He feared that his rule might be endangered by the birth of a claimant to the throne, from the royal house of David, one who would have the allegiance of the turbulent people of Israel.

"Out of the East they came,
The Wise-men riding.
The king and the scribes, with idle sneer,
Look on with mingled scorn and fear,
Their quest deriding."

Herod's heart was full of murderous hatred for the Babe that was born King of the Jews. The high priests and scribes received the announcement of the birth of

Jesus with scornful indifference. They were so familiar with the prophecies, but so indifferent to the fact! They told Herod where he was to be born, but they carried no gold and frankincense and myrrh to Bethlehem, there to pay their homage to the Christ. The Wise-men and the humble shepherds alone sought and found the Child, and then went their way rejoicing.

Herod and the scribes and the Wise-men are types of people everywhere in these days: some there always are who reject Christ, some there are who are indifferent to him, some there are who receive him with joy.

The Wisdom of the Wise-men

Let us not blame the Wise-men if they hesitate a moment at the top of the street. There they are with their camels and their finery, in the grand fashion of the splendid pictures, kings seeking a king. And this is no street for the dwelling of a king—this back street set about on either side with the narrow and commonplace houses of the poor. It means much that they went on and in. And when they were in, what did they see? A peasant mother, the wife of a country carpenter, and her new-born Child. Surely, it could not be for this that the star had shone in the east; it could not be for this that these sages had left their contemplations, and these persons of importance had journeyed over the long deserts! But the men who had recognized the star recognized also the Lord of the star. Nothing else in the story so declares their wisdom as their kneeling down before this little speechless Child and offering their gifts. The star itself was not so wonderful as that.

When one enters into the common life, resolved to live it in the spirit of Jesus, bringing into all its occupations, even the homeliest, the faithfulness, the thoroughness, the courtesy, the consideration, the gentleness, of ideal demeanor, then to him is given, in answer to his gift, the blessing of the Wise-men, and under his own roof, though the street he lives in be as narrow as that in which the carpenter and his family were lodged, the Lord Christ shall appear daily.—Condensed from The Human Nature of the Saints, by Dean Hodges.

They All Follow the Star

This is the title of a painting by Peter Janssen which makes all who gaze upon it very thoughtful. Its title tells the story. Some one has described it for us. "There is, accurately speaking, no star in the picture, but only a gleam of light in the sky and a great array of men and women with eager faces turned and uplifted by it. In the front are three figures richly mounted; beside them a sturdy young peasant mother, leading her young children by the hand. Close behind are an aged couple, supporting each other as they, too, pass onward. Beside these trudges a determined youth, pushing a handcart bearing an emaciated girl. A prisoner lifts his manacled hands to the light of the star. Its effulgence rests on the brow of a cowled nun, and brightens that of a blind beggar. It glorifies a fair-haired bride and her noble husband; and rests with even purer splendor on the face of an infant uplifted in its mother's arms. Ragged beggar and beruffled aristocrat are companions, and there is room besides all these for fierce men whose eyes yet seek the light that beckons all; for those who sing and those who sigh; for all who bear the likeness of humanity. They are following the star, and they will find and worship the Christ."

They Rejoiced with Exceeding Great Joy

Why do we keep Christmas? Some people would say, "Because it is good for trade." Some boys and girls would say, "Because we like a jolly holiday, with lots of fun, and lots of nice things to eat." But you can give a better reason. We love to keep Christmas because we love to remember how Jesus came to bring us joy. We make it a feast for children because he came as a little child. We give presents, because we remember those Wise-men who brought gifts from afar to the Babe of Bethlehem. We sing carols, because we remember how the herald angels sang at his birth. Christmas is a happy, joyous time, because then we give thanks to God for his unspeakable Gift.

Paul wanted every day to be a joy day, every meal a feast. To his dear friends in Philippi he wrote, "Rejoice in the Lord *always,* I will say it again, Rejoice!" He was in prison when he wrote these cheery words, but he was very happy even there, for he was thinking much about Jesus, feeling glad because of his love, counting on his power, thinking of his glory, prizing the privilege of working for

him, telling others about him. Whoever does that cannot keep from singing and rejoicing, and the joy of the Lord is their strength.

Often children wish it could be Christmas always, but some people get tired of Christmas. That is because they forget its meaning: "Christ has come! Christ is ours!" An old poet said that he thought he might grow weary of Christmas, coming year after year, the same when he was old and tired, as when he was young and gay, except for this—Christ came to him every day. And another wise poet who lived on the other side of the sea said in one of his songs:

"The heart must ring thy Christmas bells."

Listen while I ring the everyday Christmas bells that chime all the year round in Christian hearts: "God loves me: God is my Father! God gave Jesus to be my Savior! He can change the bad; he can make me good and glad; he is with me every day; he wants me to rejoice always! He wants me to share with my brother, for all his children must love one another!" Let us thank God for the gift of Jesus, and ask him to set his everyday Christmas bells ringing in our hearts.—Jennie Steet.

The Date of the Birth of the Child-King

When was Jesus born? What day of what month do we celebrate as his birthday? In the early days Christmas was celebrated in different parts of Europe and Asia in various months, while in the fourth century both the Eastern and the Western churches agreed upon December twenty-fifth as the right day. The exact date of Christ's birth is not known. What does Matthew say regarding the time? "In the days of Herod the King." Herod reigned thirty-seven years, but this was a definite enough statement for Matthew, for orientals think of time by periods, not by exact number of days as we do.

Our present system of chronology, by which we reckon the years before and after the birth of Christ (B.C., before Christ; A.D., Anno Domini, in the year of our Lord), was established in the sixth century A.D. Before that, time was reckoned in the year of the world (A.M., Anno Mundi) or from the founding of Rome (U.C., Urbe Condita). The task of computing the birth of Christ so as to make a new reckoning was given in the sixth century to a learned monk named Dionysius. He made an error in his computation and placed the date several years too late. Herod died in April 750 (B.C. 4). Some months must have intervened between the birth of Jesus and the slaughter of the babes at Bethlehem by Herod and the latter's death, Joseph having meanwhile taken Mary and the young child into Egypt (Mt. 2.16, 19). The date usually accepted for his birth is B.C. 5, four years and one week (if we accept Dec. 25th as the day) before the year which is called A.D. 1. In January A.D. 2, Jesus was five years old; in January A.D. 3, Jesus was six years old; thus we must always add three years to the date of any event to determine his age at that time.

Christmas was not observed even according to tradition until the second century after Christ, and it was celebrated in different parts of Europe and Asia in various months, until the fourth century both the Eastern and Western churches agreed upon December 25th as the right day.

Sentence Sermons

It is God's will that Jesus should be the Ruler of our heart, and all who are wise lay at the feet of the King the gold and frankincense and myrrh of an obedient life.—Charles E. Jefferson.

Nor crown, nor robe, nor spice I bring
As offering unto Christ, my King.
Yet have I brought a gift the Child
May not despise, however small;
For here I lay my heart today,
And it is full of love to all.—Eugene Field.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What is temptation? 2. How can one avoid temptation? 3. How can one overcome temptation? 4. What temptations do boys and girls have to meet? 5. What promise of help in meeting temptation is given in Hebrews 2.18?

BAPTISM AND TEMPTATION OF JESUS

GOLDEN TEXT: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Matthew 3.17

LESSON Matthew 3.1 to 4.11 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 32.1-7

MATTHEW 3.13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. 14 But John would have hindered him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? 15 But Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffereth him. 16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him; 17 and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

4.1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. 2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he afterward hungered. 3 And the tempter came and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread. 4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. 5 Then the devil taketh him into the holy city; and he set him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and saith unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written,

He shall give his angels charge concerning thee:

and,

On their hands they shall bear thee up,
Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7 Jesus said unto him, Again it is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God. 8 Again, the devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9 and he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. 10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. 11 Then the devil leaveth him; and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE PREACHING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST, 3.1-12.

II. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS, 3.13-17. After the return from Egypt (our last lesson), Jesus lived thirty years in Nazareth. Then, when John was baptizing, he came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by him. In great surprise John exclaimed, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" But Jesus answered that it was fitting for them to fulfill all righteousness. John's baptism was "of repentance unto the remission of sins": why then did the sinless Jesus submit to the rite? His baptism was (1) a public endorsement of John as a messenger of God; (2) the baptism was of God (Mt. 21.25), hence he submitted to the righteous ordinance; (3) it was a rite which he later enjoined on his followers and therefore he would himself submit to it; and (4) it was for him a formal setting apart, a consecration, for his great mission.

As Jesus was baptized and went up from the water the heavens were opened unto him. The open sky was the revelation to Jesus of spiritual forces that lay within his reach. "It was just as when Newton discovered the law of gravitation—heaven was opened to him: so Jesus saw the heavens opened" (F. B. Meyer). And he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him: by these words we are told that he was filled with the Spirit of God, and consecrated to his ministry. And he heard a voice out of the heavens, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased": in greater measure than before, Jesus realized now his divine Sonship and his Father's pleasure. In the words of Dr. G. A. J. Ross, the self-consecration of Jesus was rewarded as is ours today by a clearer vision of the purposes of God, by a quiet consciousness of endowment with God-given capacity for his work, and by a vivid sense of holy and filial intimacy with the Divine Being himself. "The Gospel records and our own reflection assure us that Jesus must have learned who he was little by little. The statement that he increased in wisdom is certification for this. And now the moment is one of crisis. A great, new, marvelous truth has entered into his life, and he is saying over and over to himself, trying to understand it in the fullness of its infinite meaning, 'I am the Messiah! I am the Christ! I am he for whom society has all along been looking

and waiting! I am come in answer to the prayers of the ages! I am the Servant of the Highest, the Ambassador for Heaven, the Son of God, the Savior of the world!' "

Baptism is a rite expressive of consecration. The baptism of infants expresses the parents' dedication of their children to God. The baptism of adults is their own expression of consecration of themselves to God. "If there is no consecration, the baptism is an empty, idle, unmeaning form; if there is a consecration, the baptism is its fitting expression."

III. THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS, 4.1-11.

"Musing and much revolving in his breast
How best the mighty work he might begin
Of Savior of mankind, and which way first
Publish his God-like office, now mature."

Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness. Baptism and temptation were parts of one experience. In the one Jesus received his call to consecration; in the other he considered the nature of the call, the way it must be accomplished, and the goal to which it would ultimately lead him. The same Spirit which had led him from Nazareth to the Jordan led him into the wilderness to meditate in solitude upon the responsibility laid upon him as the Son of God. He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, Matthew tells us. It is not necessary, of course, to remind ourselves that there was no appearance of the devil in bodily form, as depicted by artists and poets. On the other hand, as Dr. George Adam Smith wisely counsels, we may need a reminder not to allow our appreciation to weaken of the power which Jesus encountered in his loneliness. "To Jesus evil was a force outside of men, though it had allies within." The struggle in the wilderness was a great fact in his inner experience.

"I do not know that our belief pro and con as to the devil has any special bearing upon our present duty. God in Christ is the only One, the only Power, that can help us overcome sin, whatever the source of sin is and from whatever the temptation to sin comes" (H. Clay Trumbull).

Jesus fasted many days. For a time his thoughts were so preoccupied that he did not feel the lack of food, but at last the pangs of hunger made themselves felt. Should he use his great powers to supply his need? "If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread," was the temptation that came to him. He had been assured at his baptism that he was the Son of God; what harm could there be in putting this to the test? " 'Abandoned by God and on the verge of death by starvation, can you be God's Son? Perhaps, but in a matter so momentous make sure. If you are God's Son, you will have miraculous power; turn the stone into a loaf and the prodigy will reaffirm your conviction and preserve you for your mission.' The plausibility of the suggestion marked its fatal character. Jesus detected its subtlety. To work a miracle that he might reassure himself would imply that he had already begun to doubt: the mere acceptance of the challenge would have involved defeat. Humanely speaking, death by starvation stares him in the face. But he remains absolutely sure of his Sonship, and therefore of his preservation to fulfill his task. He stakes himself and his destiny not on physical nourishment, but on the word of God" (A. S. Peake).

As a boy and young man at Nazareth, Jesus had made words of Scripture his own. In this time of need they sprang to his lips, and with a quotation from Deuteronomy (one of his favorite books), he put aside the temptation: Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

"It is not, 'I, as God, must have divine sustenance, and so can do without human food.' It is, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.' Humanity was tested there. Can it in this Supreme Specimen of it be satisfied with bread? If it can, then all these dreams, these cravings, these discontents, these importunate demands of men for spiritual things, for truth, for duty, for God, are mere chimeras. If it cannot, if this Man, the best of men, says that food is not enough for man, then no man ought to be satisfied as long as he has only the mere nourishment that feeds the body" (Phillips Brooks).

The second line of approach is more subtle than the first. In spirit Jesus is

taken to a lofty pinnacle of the temple, there to prove his Messianic claims by casting himself down unharmed; for is it not written (Ps. 91, 11, 12),

He shall give his angels charge concerning thee.
On their hands they shall bear thee up,
Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone?

"The devil can quote Scripture to his liking," quoth Shakespeare. He does not misquote it, he merely misapplies it, and in so doing, as Dr. A. T. Robertson pleasantly observes, "the devil has no monopoly." There is a similar use of Scripture in Martin Chuzzlewit, where Jonas, who rebels at his father's long life, exclaims, "Where is his religion, I should like to know, when he goes flying in the face of the Bible like that! Threescore and ten's the mark; and no man with a conscience and a proper sense of what's expected of him has any business to live longer."

This was the temptation, not only to put God to test presumptuously, but also to take a short cut, the easy road to power, for such a miracle would secure for him at once a mighty following. Several times later in his ministry he was called upon for just such a "sign," or supernatural proof of his credentials as the Messiah: see Matthew 12.38; 16.1; John 2.18. Jesus met the temptation with another quotation from Deuteronomy (6.16): Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God.

Then upon an exceeding high mountain, "not to be sought for in terrestrial geography," came the temptation to lower his ideals, to accept a political Messiahship, to attain universal dominion in such terms as would be virtually to worship Satan. "It was another form of the old bargain which we find in literature for centuries, by which a man pays his soul to the devil as the price of his achieved desires." Dr. J. H. Jowett characterizes this third temptation as "The Soul in the Market": the tempter suggests a bargain and makes an offer; he proposes a profitable exchange, and for his treasures of the soul he offers the treasures of the world. "Think how much the young Nazarene might accomplish by the possession of earthly rule. He could ride abroad redressing human wrongs. He could destroy the tyranny of iniquitous taxation. He could lighten the burden of the poor. Wherever men were in servitude, he could lead them into glorious liberty. 'All these things will I give thee!' What are the terms of the exchange? 'If thou wilt fall down and worship me.' The devil is seeking his exchanges in the region of the soul. 'Alter thy soul posture. Readjust thy secret homage. Change thy spiritual inclinations. Dilute the stringency of thy holiness. Change thy heavenly principles for loose expediences. Change thy impossible ideals for working compromises. Change thy serene wisdom for sharp subtlety. Change thy unvarnished truth for the oil of flattery. Make more of appearances. Let life be more a game, a scheme, an artifice, and less of an exalted crusade. All these things I will give thee, if thou wilt only play my game. Thou shalt appoint the goal, but mine shall be the way to reach it. Thine shall be the end, but mine shall be the means.' Such were the terms of the proposed exchange."

Does the end justify the means? "Nowhere is homage to Satan more common than in connection with sacred causes, the interests of truth, righteousness and God," Dr. A. B. Bruce thinks. "Nothing tests purity of motive so thoroughly as temptations of this class. Christ was proof against them. The prince of the world found nothing of this sort in him (John 14.30). He took his own path, and became a Christ, neither after the type imagined by the Baptist, nor according to the liking of the Jews and their leaders. So he gained universal empire, but at a great cost."

"They took him to a mountain top to see
Where earth's fair kingdoms flung their golden net
To snare the feet and trick the souls of men.
With slimy craft and cynic guile they said:
If he but sees the glory and the pride,
The pomps and pleasures of this tinsel world,
He will forget his splendid, futile dreams.
And so they took him up and tempted him.
But from the mountain peak he raised his eyes,
And saw the deep, calm sky, the stars, and God"
(Winfred Ernest Garrison).

"Get thee hence," Jesus vehemently exclaimed, "for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

In the Louvre there is a picture by Guido Reni of St. Michael with his foot on Satan's neck. William James' comment upon the picture is this: "The richness of the picture is in large part due to Satan's being there. The world, that is to say, is all the richer for having a devil in it, as long as we keep our foot upon his neck."

"Was the trial sore, temptation sharp?
Thank God a second time.
Why comes temptation, but for man to meet
And master and make crouch beneath his feet,
And so be pedestaled in triumph?"

Then the devil leaveth him; and behold, angels came and ministered unto him. Jesus left the wilderness with absolute trust in his Father's care, his lofty ideals of his mission undimmed, and his complete dedication of himself to his Father's will unshaken.

"If life were always a sweet song
We might grow weary listening long
To one refrain.
No! storms must come and chaos too,
And after that the blessed blue
Of sunny skies.

"A storm-tried soul (it seems to me)
Is tuned to heavenly harmony" (Ella H. Eckel).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Command that these stones become bread, 4.3. Oriental bread is made in small, thin, flat loaves, or cakes, and many of the stones lying about in the wilderness resembled them in shape. The sight of the stones may have increased the pangs of hunger. The Jews were looking for a Messiah who would perform just such a miracle as that of turning stones into bread. The rabbis said that when he came the trees would bear fruit the year around, and a single grape would load a wagon and from it men would draw wine as from a cask.

Cast thyself down, 4.6. Religious men in the East have a tendency to become heroes. If the aspirations to become pious once seize us in that part of the world, we hate reason and calculation in every form. Fear of desperate deeds becomes almost synonymous with infidelity. Rashness, recklessness, become a positive passion. Daring courage takes the form of a strong love for physical suffering. The anchorite believes himself, and is believed by others, to be able to work miracles. There is a semi-skeptical desire to draw largely upon the omnipotency and all-mercifulness of Providence, and thus put its sufficiency to a severe test. The devotee instinctively wishes to produce an effect upon the world by the startling nature of his self-imperilment. Dangers and miseries are coveted, formidable risks are run, and hair-breadth escapes are made. If the rash enterprises into which zealots launch with a view to their own distinction were analyzed by the scrutiny of spiritual insight, three-fourths thereof would resolve themselves into an impulse to hurl themselves from mountain-tops, in the vain hope that angels would minister to their safety.—Mozoomdar.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Silent Years at Nazareth

There is no definite record of Jesus' life before he reached the age of thirty years. He followed the custom of the orient and took up the occupation of Joseph, his reputed father, who was a carpenter. After the incident in the temple at Jerusalem when twelve years of age, he waited eighteen years at Nazareth, advancing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men, before entering upon the work he felt God had given him to do.

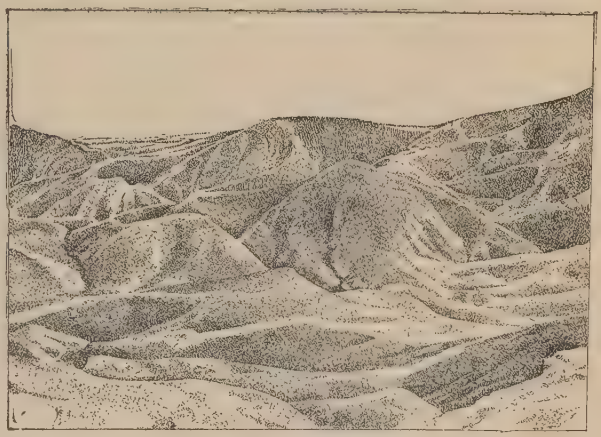
We do not always stop to ask ourselves how much this must have cost him, Dr. Charles E. Jefferson reminds us. "We Americans are among the most impatient

of all peoples. It is difficult to induce many of our young men to wait long enough to prepare themselves adequately for the business of life. Thousands of boys drop out of school in the grammar grades, not because they could not finish their education, but because they are impatient to go to work.

"Think of what Jesus' dream was and you will understand how it must have tugged at him and made the years seem interminable in drowsy, prosaic Nazareth. But he waited. Through all the blazing years of youth Jesus waited. It was not until he was in his thirtieth year that he said to himself, The time has come."

The Account of the Temptation

There were no witnesses to Jesus' experience in the wilderness. "If the motion-picture man had been there his wonderful camera would have recorded none of the movements indicated in the narrative. If the sensitive disc of the phonograph had been within hearing distance it would have registered none of this conversation between Christ and the powers of darkness. But if those who have eyes to see, ears to hear and hearts to understand had been present, they would have witnessed a struggle where the supreme Soul in history was wrestling, not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the ruler of dark suggestion, against spiritual wickedness in high places. And they would also have beheld a spiritual victory and ministering angels rejoicing with him who overcame."



The Wilderness of Judea

The account of the inward struggle must have been given by Jesus himself. He pictured it by a dialogue between Satan and himself. How otherwise than by symbolic language could he have represented to men of his age the inward operations of the mind? We may think of him as telling his experience to his disciples in order to warn them against similar temptations, or perhaps to justify a course of action which they opposed. Dr. A. E. Garvie makes the interesting suggestion that no fitter time for this disclosure can be thought of than just after his disciples' confession of his Messiahship and Peter's rebuke of his coming passion. "His rebuke of Peter surely required explanation and justification. Peter must be made to understand that he was playing the part of the tempter. How could Jesus more impressively show that Peter's thoughts and plans, in which the other disciples shared, savored not of God but of men, than by a confession of his own experience? He himself had been tempted to take the course which was being preferred by his disciples rather than the path of divine appointment, on which he had just expressed his resolve to enter, and had rejected the course which they proposed as a submission to the solicitation of Satan himself."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The *wilderness of Judea,* where John was preaching and baptizing, was a stony, desert region extending for about ten miles westward from the Dead Sea and the mouth of the Jordan. The traditional site of the baptism of Jesus is at the ford opposite Jericho. Another site fifteen miles south of the Sea of Galilee is credited by scholars.

Tradition has assigned Mount Quarantania, near Jericho, as the site of the temptation.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

A British clergyman was telling the story of Jesus' temptation to a group of street Arabs. Being a true teacher, he brought the lesson home to their daily lives. "Now, suppose," he said, "that you were walking in Farringdon Market, and you were pretty hungry, and there you saw some fine golden bananas. And suppose the devil came behind you and said, 'Take one—nobody will see you, and they won't miss it.' What would you do?" One little chap earnestly replied, "I should say, 'Hop it, you old devil!'" That was the boy's way of putting the words, "Get thee behind me, Satan." The truth had gone home, and that was the main thing.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

TRIUMPHING OVER TEMPTATION

Beginning the Lesson

The baptism had launched Jesus upon his mission of redeeming the world. How should he accomplish it? He must have been overwhelmed by the burden and responsibility before him, and in the tumult of emotions the need of being alone, far from the haunts of men, where he could commune with himself and with his Father, must have been imperative.

"To a great character," declares Jean Paul Richter, "great joys and great sorrows serve as heights from whence to survey the whole pathway of life." Such a height was the baptism of water and of Spirit to Jesus, and in the forty days in the wilderness he surveyed the whole pathway which he was to tread. How should he begin his unique work? What method should he use? Where would this course lead him? Where would that? Which was in accordance with the will of his Father?

You recall that toward the close of his ministry Jesus told the multitudes how exacting was discipleship and bade them count the cost in the beginning. Which of you, he said, desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have wherewith to complete it? Or what king, as he goeth to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? In the wilderness after the baptism Jesus himself was first counting the cost before he undertook his life work.

The Purpose of the Temptation

A part of the purpose of our Lord's temptation must be in its power of example and influence for us. He was the Leader of men in the new life, and so he must go the way that they would have to go. If mankind were to be led into the city of God, it might be by an angel flying overhead, clear above all the tops of the trees through which they had to force their way out of sound of the roaring torrents they had got to cross; or it might be by a Man walking before them, planting his feet first in the pathless ways where the serpents might be lurking, wetting his feet first in every cold stream that his followers would have to ford. Millions of men who would have lost sight of the Angel will follow the Fellow-Man.—Phillips Brooks.

Thou Shalt not Make Trial of the Lord thy God

God's laws are a part of God's love; so accept and use them. If there are stairs by which to climb down, climb down, don't jump until there is no other choice. If you see better with glasses than without them, use them; they are God's help, through optical science, to failing sight. If a doctor can cure you, let him cure you; he is God's agent, through medical science. If vaccination keeps off smallpox, get vaccinated; God's law works in the vaccine. And so on and on.

I knew a woman once who announced in prayer meeting that to wear glasses showed a lack of faith in God. She took hers off and never more than half saw afterwards. Sometimes the eyes will regain their power if you make them do it—the specialists know that—but hers were not that sort of case. She wanted God to turn back the years and work a miracle for her particular benefit. If we should use a stronger word than tempt in the twelfth verse, and say, "Thou shalt not try to drive the Lord thy God," we see what this temptation really means. There are plenty of people about us who, through their desire for help, or happiness, or some such thing, are trying to drive God in their way rather than seeking to fall in with his. Gaius Glenn Atkins, in The Westminster Teacher.

The Source of Strength to Overcome Temptation

The rat is a great danger to the airship and the aëroplane; the mechanism is so delicate that one rat on board can do serious mischief. If it bites through woodwork, or tears the fabric of the wings, it may cause the vessel to collapse.

There is a remarkable story of a large aëroplane that during the war was flying over mountainous country on the western front. Pilot and observer were much disturbed at discovering traces of a rat on board, but they had no means of capturing it. They thought of landing, but they knew that their hidden foe might bring them to disaster before they could reach the earth. Suddenly a bright idea came to the pilot, and he began to mount higher and higher in the already rarefied air. Still higher he went until he had almost reached an altitude higher than any that man has attained. Both men found breathing extremely difficult; their ears felt as if bursting, their breath came in tearing gasps; but they were waiting for something they knew must happen. They knew that their enemy must succumb before they succumbed themselves. Presently with a feeble scamper a large rat emerged from some secret nook of the aëroplane and fell panting and dying on the floor. It was the work of a moment to fling it overboard.

The story carries a moral with it. Many a secret foe of the purity and safety of the soul would perish if we more often sought the noble altitudes of the "hills of God."—The Youth's Companion.

The Power that Is Ours

It is inevitable that temptations come, but every one of us has it largely within his will to say what his temptation shall be: to determine by his conduct of today what form the temptations of tomorrow shall assume. Every stage of our life sets the problems of the stage which follows it, and our behavior in youth settles how much our manhood is to be harassed and distracted from the duties which await it.

For temptations, broadly speaking, are of two kinds. They may be little short of penal; pursuing us from our past, the results of old indulgences, and ever coming upon us but with that added force to them, and weakness to us, which springs from the recollection of our former defeats by them. Or like Christ's, they may be not punishments but discoveries, opportunities and tests: the vision to us of our greatness, that two worlds are in contest for our souls; the proof that we are trusted and called of God; the obligation to some higher task; the signals of a growing and a destined nature.

And each of us has it in his power to determine at least in what proportion these two kinds of temptation will be mingled in his experience.—George Adam Smith, in The Forgiveness of Sins.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The baptism and temptation. See Paterson-Smyth's People's Life of Christ, pages 85-107 ($1.50), Revell Edition.

2. The sinlessness of Jesus. We do not say that he was not able to sin, but that he was able not to sin.—Robert E. Speer.

3. Temptations in the business of earning one's daily bread. Do Christian standards need to be lowered?

4. Was Horace Mann right when he said that he who cannot resist temptation is not a man, that he is wanting in the highest attributes of humanity?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. "From that time": to what does this refer? 2. Why would a fisherman make a good disciple? 3. What was the threefold mission of Jesus? 4. What can you tell about Jesus as a Physician? 5. As a Teacher? 6. As an Evangelist? 7. Give instances in which Jesus showed his skill as a teacher.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

JESUS FACING HIS LIFE WORK

Beginning the Lesson

In the great museums there are rooms devoted to relics of the Roman Empire. Among them there may be a Roman coffin of stone from the time of the early followers of Christ. If you look at its sides you can tell whether or not the one

buried in the coffin was a Christian. If you find wavy lines carved on the sides, you may know that they were meant to represent water—which was the sign of the Christian baptism. The Christian in those early days wished to testify even in his death to the fact that he had repented of his sins and been forgiven and in token thereof had been baptized.

When Jesus faced his life work he left his home in Nazareth and went to the Jordan, where John the Baptist was preaching and baptizing to be himself baptized by John. But Jesus was sinless, he had nothing of which to repent. Why, then, did he wish to be baptized?

One reason must have been that he wanted to do what other people who loved God should do. He believed that it was God's will for him, and he always did what was pleasing to God. Another reason was that he was about to begin his ministry as the Son of God, and at his baptism he was consecrated for that ministry. There he learned that the life he was about to lead met God's approval.

One who never Yielded to Temptation

There is an interesting story about Christopher, the strongest man of his time, who made a vow to serve only a man who feared no other foe. At length he entered the service of a king who was more powerful than all his neighbors, and Christopher thought that he had now found his true master. But one day the king remarked that he feared no one but the devil. "Then," said Christopher, "the devil will I serve, and not the king."

How Christopher served the devil we are not told, but he felt content to be in the service of the strongest being in the world. One day when he was following the devil over the land they came upon a cross of rough wood set up by a roadside. The devil quickly turned in another direction.

"Why do you turn away from this post of wood?" Christopher asked.

"I hate it," his master answered, "for it is the sign of One who defied me, whom I could not win to my will."

"And what is his name?"

"That name shall never cross my lips."

"Then him will I seek and serve," cried Christopher.

And the story tells of his long search for the Christ till at last he found him in a little Child.

After his baptism Jesus was severely tempted, and he told his disciples about his inward struggle as a contest between the devil and himself. Why would it have been wrong for Jesus to yield to a temptation?

A Temptation is a Testing

A firm installed in a building an apparatus consisting partly of a stack of steam pipes. The usual pressure was to be three pounds per square inch, and all went well for a time. One day, however, the pressure considerably increased, and minute jets of steam were seen to be darting from invisible holes in the iron stack. The firm was asked to send a man down, and he admitted that, "owing to the pressure of business," they had omitted to test the pipes. All trustworthy engineers have their materials tested; they know just what weight, or pull, or bending, a rod, pipe, plate, etc., will sustain. The "testing-shed" is an important part of all big iron-works. The result? The engineer knows what size and shape of material he must use to make his bridge, etc., reliable (trustworthy) and safe.

It is the same with men. A man wants to practice as a doctor. We ask, "What qualifications has he?"—that is, what are the examinations or tests he has passed? A man wishes to be a sailor in the navy; he is measured, weighed, has his lungs, eyesight, hearing, etc., examined—i.e., he is tested. If he does not stand the test he is thrown out.

Christ had to be tested. This was his mission: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." But what could he, the Son of God, know about sin? Had he ever felt the power of temptation? Did he know how easy it was to fall and how hard to resist? He did know the power of temptation, "For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." Then we can trust him. When every iron rod in the bridge has been tested, we do not fear to run the train across. When the doctor has been tested, we entrust our bodies to his care; and so on. Thus, as Christ has been tempted, we feel that he knows the power of sin, and when he offers to "save

his people from their sins," we feel that he knows and understands our difficulties and dangers. "He has been tested, and we can trust him."

Do you know what happens to the rods that won't stand the engineer's testings? They are "scrapped"—thrown on the scrap-heap. And if you want to avoid being "scrapped" when tested you must resist by Christ's help and by the Word of God.—Adapted from an article in the Sunday School Chronicle by W. D. Bavin.

This Way Out

One "Way Out" of trouble is along the Line of Earnest Prayer. We shall hear a voice behind us saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it."

Another "Way Out" of trouble is along the Line of Determined Resistance. If we are tempted to do wrong, we must say, "No; not even once will I do what is wrong." The tempter may say, "Other people do it," but we must reply, "But I will not." He may say, "It is only a little sin," but we must say, "No, I will not do even a little wrong." The place to resist temptation is at the very beginning.

Another "Way Out" of trouble is along the Line of Right Action. You have read about King Alfred in your history books. One story about him is that he promised that all travelers along the roads in his kingdom should be protected against thieves and robbers; only, he said, they must keep on the high roads. If they wandered over the moors, or if they strayed into the forests, or if they went up the mountains where there were caves, they would not be safe. But if they kept on the king's highway, he would protect them.

God says the same thing to us: "If you keep on the High Road of Doing What is Right I will protect you."—Condensed from Sunbeams for Sundays by W. W. Robinson.

How Lois Helped Another Overcome Temptation

Lois was trying on a cloak in a store when she found a rose-embroidered handkerchief in the pocket. It would be so easy to keep it! Surely she had as much right to it as anyone had. No doubt some one who had tried on the coat before her had left it there, but there wasn't a chance in a hundred that the owner would remember and come back for it!

The girl who was waiting on her was coming back with another coat. Lois suddenly held out the pretty handkerchief. "I found it in the pocket," she said. "Some one must have left it there."

"I'll turn it in at the Lost and Found," the girl replied. "It's pretty, isn't it?"

"It's one of the loveliest things I ever saw." Lois did not guess what her voice revealed.

The girl glanced at her curiously. "You might stop in at the end of a month," she said. "It will be yours if it isn't claimed, you know."

"It's too pretty not to be claimed," Lois replied. "I'd better forget it. Now, about those coats."

At the end of a month she went to the store, but the handkerchief was gone. The clerk shook her head indifferently as she glanced over the handkerchiefs that had been turned in.

As Lois started away the girl from the cloak department happened to be passing; she stopped. "Did you get the handkerchief?" she asked.

"No, it was called for."

"I'm sorry," the girl said, looking at her oddly.

It was too bad that Lois could not know, for the odd look meant that Lois's battle had helped another girl fight and conquer a much bigger one.—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons

"Temptation is not an opportunity to sin; it is an opportunity to refuse to sin."

The heart that is fullest of good works hath in it least room for Satan's temptations.—Bunyan.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What did Jesus mean when he told the brothers that he would make them fishers of men? 2. How can you follow Jesus? 3. How can you teach, preach, heal? 4. Is there some service which our class can render some one who is ill? 5. What can we do for the hospital in our city? 6. Suppose there were no hospital in your city: what could be done for the sick who are also poor?

JESUS BEGINS HIS MINISTRY

GOLDEN TEXT: Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Matthew 4.17

LESSON Matthew 4.12-25 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 9.2-7

MATTHEW 4.17 From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

18 And walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. 19 And he saith unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men. 20 And they straightway left the nets, and followed him. 21 And going on from thence he saw two other brethren, James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. 22 And they straightway left the boat and their father, and followed him.

23 And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people. 24 And the report of him went forth into all Syria: and they brought unto him all that were sick, holden with divers diseases and torments, possessed with demons, and epileptic, and palsied; and he healed them. 25 And there followed him great multitudes from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judæa and *from* beyond the Jordan.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. CAPERNAUM BECOMES JESUS' HEADQUARTERS, verses 12-16. See The Historical Background.

II. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AT HAND, verse 17. From the time of his coming to Capernaum, Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent, change your minds, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. The call to repentance was the message which he bade his disciples proclaim when he sent them out two and two to preach, and in his final words to his disciples after his resurrection he said that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations.

For centuries the Jews had been looking forward to the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven, and by this phrase they meant the restoration of their nation to independence and power under divine leadership. Jesus bade them make a radical change in their way of thinking, and learn the truth which he sought to teach them, that the Kingdom of Heaven is neither a geographical nor a political realm, but a spiritual realm. It is the kingdom of the Father's rule in the hearts of men.

"Now that the King had appeared, had not the Kingdom come? Nay, it never comes till it is welcome. Therefore we still pray, Thy Kingdom come" (David Smith).

III. THE CALL OF THE FOUR DISCIPLES, verses 18-22. Walking one day by the Sea of Galilee, Jesus saw two brothers, Peter and Andrew, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. "The successful use of this net requires a keen eye, an active frame, and great skill in throwing," says W. M. Thompson. "The fisherman must, too, be patient, watchful, wide-awake, and prompt to seize the exact moment to throw; these were qualities needed by fishers of men."

"Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men," was Jesus' call. This was not the first time they had seen Jesus: see The Historical Background.

It is not enough to hear and obey the call of Christ and to start to follow, nor yet even to give up evil practices for his sake. We are not following after him unless we are doing something for him. Are you worth knowing? is a surprising question. But are you worth knowing as a follower of Christ?

At once they left their nets and followed Jesus. "Mark both their faith and their obedience," counsels Chrysostom, the great fourth century preacher of Constantinople; "for though they were in the midst of their work—and ye know how greedy a thing fishing is—yet when they heard his command they delayed not, they procrastinated not, they said not, 'Let us return home and converse with our kinsfolk,' but they forsook all and followed."

"It is an axiom in many magazine offices that the introduction to almost any article can be cut by the editor without sacrificing anything of real value. Even experienced writers almost invariably write something before they begin to say anything. Advertising writers are compelled to greater condensation, but they, too, are guilty of much waste of words. How often you must read and read before you discover just what it is that the advertiser wants you to do. Jesus had no introductions. A single sentence grips your attention; three or four more tell the story; one or two more and the application is driven home. When he wanted a new disciple he said simply, 'Follow me.' It was the way Jesus looked at men, and the life he led among them, that gave his words impelling power" (Bruce Barton).

Equally obedient were James and John, sons of Zebedee, whom Jesus called while they were mending their nets.

"In simple trust like theirs who heard
Beside the Syrian Sea
The gracious calling of the Lord,
Let us, like them without a word,
Rise up and follow Thee" (Whittier).

IV. THE THREEFOLD MINISTRY OF JESUS, verses 23-25. In verse 23, Matthew makes a general statement of Jesus' work in Galilee—that he went about teaching and preaching and healing. He taught in the synagogues, for while sacrifices were offered only in the temple at Jerusalem, every town and village had its synagogue for worship. He preached the gospel, or good news, of the Kingdom, and healed all kinds of sickness. His fame as a Physician spread throughout Syria, and from the Decapolis and Judea and beyond Jordan people came bringing their sick ones for him to cure. The word *epileptic,* in verse 24, is *lunatic* in the King James' version. An epileptic was called a lunatic, from *luna,* the moon, because it was believed that his disease became worse during certain phases of the moon. "Possessed with demons and epileptics, and palsied" is not found in the Sinaitic manuscript; it may have been added here by a copyist to explain "divers diseases and torments."

Jesus' ministry was an itinerant one—he went about from place to place teaching and preaching and healing. The nature of his work made the fellowship and apprenticeship of disciples necessary. The prophets had had their scholars and the scribes had had their schools; it was a long established custom, but the need of a training school was never as great as now. Jesus had many things to teach that only trained hearers could fathom, many things to do that only loyal pupils could undertake, a legacy of service to learn that only skilled followers could carry out.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

They were fishers, verse 18. In the time of Christ there were several hundred fishing boats on the Sea of Galilee, according to Josephus.

Come ye after me, verse 19. Many Greek philosophers instructed their pupils as the latter followed them from place to place.

And they straightway left their nets and followed him, verse 20. We might think it a difficult matter for anyone to leave his occupation and without means of earning a livelihood, follow a leader from place to place. But we must remember that the climate of Palestine is more genial than ours, and that food and clothing and shelter there are more simple. Yet there was sacrifice of comfort and home ties. One who lightly said to Jesus, "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest," Jesus reminded that "the foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry

Matthew follows his account of the consecration and testing of Jesus at the Jordan and in the wilderness with an account of the beginning of the Galilean Ministry. That about a year intervened between the two we should not know were it not for the record of the Judean Ministry given in John 1.19 to 3.36.

John the Baptist was arrested by Herod and imprisoned in the castle of Machærus,

and Jesus withdrew into Galilee in the fall of A.D. 27, and during the winter left Nazareth for Capernaum. Luke tells the reason for the change of headquarters. Jesus had preached in the synagogue of his early home and been rejected by the people, who thought the One whom they had known in his youth could not be the Messiah (Luke 4.16-31).

The Call to Permanent Discipleship

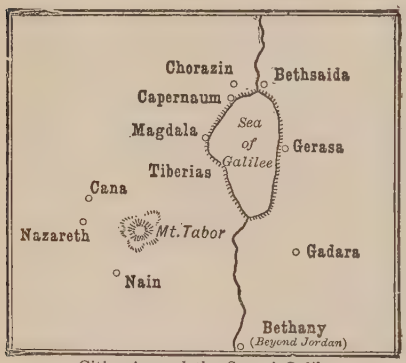
The first call had come to the disciples many months earlier. After his victory in the wilderness, Jesus remained for some time in the neighborhood of John the Baptist. One day when John was baptizing at Bethany beyond Jordan, he bore his testimony to Jesus as the Messiah, and pointed him out to two of his own disciples, Andrew and John, as "The Lamb of God." These two followed Jesus, and on the morrow Andrew brought his brother Simon Peter, and probably John then brought his brother James, to Jesus. Philip was called, and he brought Nathaniel. It was after Jesus settled in Capernaum that he called the four fishermen to permanent discipleship, the nucleus of his band of followers.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Syria, of which Palestine is a part, extended along the eastern Mediterranean from Antioch on the Orontes to the border of Arabia.

The three provinces of Palestine west of the Jordan were *Judea* in the south, *Samaria* in the center and *Galilee* in the north. The word *Decapolis* means The League of Ten Cities; with one exception they were all in *Perea,* east of the Lower Jordan and the Dead Sea.

Capernaum was on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee. There is no part of Palestine today which recalls to the traveler Christ's presence so vividly as Galilee and its shores. As one rides down from Nazareth and first sees its waters far below, and then as one sails across and around it, incidents of his life seem so real as to be almost memories rather than history. One sees the little group of humble fishermen following their Master, the throng of afflicted men and women coming to the Great Physician for healing and the crowds in the synagogue listening breathlessly to the words of the Great Preacher. It is all very real, very vital.



Cities Around the Sea of Galilee

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

To these fishermen Jesus said, "Come ye after me, and I will make you *fishers of men.*" How could he more tersely put before these men the work for which he desired to equip them than by this telling metaphor, drawn from their daily occupation? As Bruce Barton puts it,—their minds were in motion; their hands were busy with their nets; their conversation was about conditions in the fishing trade, and the prospects of a good market for the day's catch. To have broken in on such thinking with the offer of employment as preachers of a new religion would have been to confuse them and invite a certain rebuff. What was Jesus' approach? "Come with me," he said, "and I will make you fishers of men." Fishers—that was a word they could understand. Fishers of men—that was a new idea: what was he driving at? Fishers of men—it sounded interesting.

Jesus constantly used the most familiar details of everyday experience to draw from them moving lessons. In our study of Matthew's Gospel let us study the methods of the Great Teacher and apply them in our own teaching.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM OF JESUS

Beginning the Lesson

What three things is it said that Jesus did in Galilee? He went about teaching, preaching and healing—a comprehensive program of work, as our department topic

well calls it. Jesus was the Helper of the whole man—of body, soul and spirit. It was all-round good tidings he brought to the world. Was healing a leading part of his ministry, or was it a minor part, contributory to his teaching? Was he chiefly engaged in teaching or in preaching?

The Great Teacher

Rabbi, Teacher, was the title by which Jesus was commonly known. Glance through the Gospels and notice how often he is addressed as Teacher. The word *Master* so frequently used in the King James' Version, has in most places the meaning of *Teacher*. He sometimes preached; he sometimes healed; but he always taught.

We take up next week his Sermon on the Mount, as we call it, but it is not so called in the Bible, and is in reality a grouping together by Matthew of many lessons which Jesus taught. Matthew himself prefaces the "Sermon" with the words: "And when he had sat down, his disciples came unto him, and he taught them." And Matthew ends the "Sermon" with the words, "For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." There are five rather long discourses in the Gospel according to Matthew which were not continuous discourses but, as we know from parallel accounts in Mark and Luke, were collected by our Synoptist from a score of conversations which arose at different times from various questions and incidents.

"Whence hath this man letters, never having learned?" his enemies questioned. He was an Artisan, a Carpenter, in his upbringing a Man of the people. But he was not unlearned and ignorant. Nor need we assume that his knowledge was all due to superhuman endowment, to his unique relationship to the Father. He grew in knowledge and wisdom. He made good use of such educational advantages as Nazareth afforded. He could speak two languages, and probably more. He had a profound knowledge of Jewish law. His familiarity with the Jewish Scriptures was not surpassed by that of the scribes and Pharisees, the learned men of his day. "He was Master of the literature, the philosophy, the ethics, the theology, the traditions, upon which the preachers and teachers, the professors and the clergy, of his time took their stand." He was thirty years of age when he began his public ministry, and those years of early manhood had been fruitful years for him. Just as last week we saw him agonizing in the wilderness over the methods he should employ in his ministry, so we may think of him as acquiring his knowledge and his ability to make plain to others the truths he came to teach through long hours of intense study and reflection.

He taught wherever there were hearers, in the temple or by the wayside, in the market-place, at the dinner table, in the boat, on the hill. He was as eager to make the truths known to an individual, whether to a sinful woman of Samaria, a sinful man like Zacchæus, or a wise Pharisee like Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, and a teacher of Israel, as he was to the multitudes that thronged wherever he went. We read much in these days about a teachers' need of being pupil-centered rather than subject-centered. Jesus was pupil-centered.

His teaching anticipates modern psychology and pedagogy, and is the model for all who would use the most approved methods of teaching. Let us briefly mention a few of the characteristics of his teaching. He was absolute master of his subject. His words were direct, simple, trenchant. He was always interesting. He knew how to adapt his lessons to his hearers and the occasions. He made frequent use of the question-and-answer method, and in his apt use of stories, parables, he has never been equaled. He stimulated his hearers to think, to reach their own conclusions, to decide moral questions for themselves. However dull his pupils, he never lost patience. He saw the potential good in every one, and sought to develop it. And he himself was the embodiment of all the truths and ideals he sought to impart.

As the Great Teacher, Jesus stands supreme. In content his teaching has a loftiness and universality unattainable by others. The effectiveness of his teaching is to be gauged by the lives he has influenced—as the sands of the sea in number. In the skill by which he conveys both the content and the spirit of his message, he is the world's Greatest Teacher.

Jesus Went about Doing Good

When the golden evening gathered on the shore of Galilee,
When the fishing boats lay quiet by the sea,
Long ago the people wondered, tho' no sign was in the sky,
For the glory of the Lord was passing by.

Not in robes of purple splendor, not in silken softness shod,
But in raiment worn with travel came their God,
And the people knew His presence by the heart that ceased to sigh,
When the glory of the Lord was passing by.

For he healed their sick at even, and he cured the lepers' sore,
And sinful men and women sinned no more,
And the world grew mirthful hearted, and forgot its misery
When the glory of the Lord was passing by.

Not in robes of purple splendor, but in lives that do His will,
In patient acts of kindness He comes still;
And the people cry with wonder, tho' no sign is in the sky,
That the glory of the Lord is passing by.

—From The Empire of Love, by W. J. Dawson.

The church is much more fruitful in such good works than the man on the street suspects. Most of our colleges were founded under its inspiration; most of our hospitals grew out of, and are supported by, its membership; the ideals that animate all civic enterprises are its ideals; and its members furnish to such movements the most dependable support. More than this, the day by day life of any genuine pastor is a constant succession of healings and helpings, as any one who has been privileged to grow up in any minister's family very well knows. The door-bell rings at breakfast-time; it rings at dinner-time; it rings late at night—and every ring means that some one has come to cast his burden upon the parsonage. A man comes blinded by his greed or hatred or fear—he opens his heart to the pastor, and goes away having received his sight. A parent whose child is dead in selfishness, comes leading the child by the hand. And sometimes the preacher is able to touch the withered veins of consciousness, and life becomes normal and wholesome again. A man out of work, whose family is hungry, knocks timidly at the parsonage door. And somehow, from the pastor's few loaves and fishes, the other family is fed. These are Jesus' works, done in Jesus' name.—Bruce Barton, in The Man Nobody Knows.

The Gospel of Power

What we know as the gospel sometimes seems weak in comparison with the mighty demonstrations of present-day energy. But it has been one of the most potent of all the forces in human history. Jesus moved in the consciousness of power, though government and learning and the more influential organizations of his time gave him no assistance. They were indeed fatally hostile to him and put him to death. It is instructive to look through the New Testament and discover how often the word "power" is used. It is the more instructive when we discover that at least seven Greek words are necessary to convey to us the wide variety of ways in which the energy of Jesus' purpose works. He went about in the "power of the spirit," He said to his disciples, "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth." Eliminating those words that refer to authority, there are at least four words that we may translate as "power." St. Paul employed them freely, using all four of them in one single passage. One of those words, which we have merely transliterated, is our word "energy," and another we know as the adjective "dynamic" and the noun "dynamite." It is unfortunate for purposes of intellectual and spiritual comparison that "dynamite," a Greek word made over into English, has so violent a significance. We do not quite like to say that the gospel is the dynamite of God unto salvation. But if we were to take away the harsh associations of the word in English we might use the term and perhaps not be seriously misunderstood.

We do not know how to create power. It is already in coal, and we contrive to utilize some of it and waste the rest. It is already in gasoline, and we can use a part of it there. The encyclopedias and dictionaries do not help us much in discovering what power is, but they tell us a little about how it can be developed and transmitted.

Until a century ago power as used by men had to be measured by the energy in a man's hands and arms, with a little help from horses and oxen and a very little more from water running over crude wheels. We use it now in steam, electricity and the various applications of chemistry, including high explosives and radioactivity, but we do not know much about it.

But we know that in human life the most important thing in the employment of power is the moral quality of those who develop and use it. Already there is

power enough within the reach of people of unsound mind and evil purpose to make civilization insecure. We do not particularly need more physical energy for our daily life, though that will come, but we do need the control of power through a sound mind, a worthy purpose and true spiritual volition. That and that only can make safe the large increase of power which is the heritage of modern humanity.—The Youth's Companion.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Jesus did not select his followers from among those who had nothing to do. His call came to busy men. The service which he expects of busy men of today. See Chapter II of A. B. Bruce's Training of the Twelve ($1.00); Lecture I of W. F. McDowell's In the School of Christ ($1.00); pages 178-182 of Paterson-Smyth's People's Life of Christ ($1.00, Revell Edition).

2. Modern evangelistic methods.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Make an analysis of Chapter V. 2. What is the meaning of the word *blessed?* 3. What does each of the Beatitudes mean? 4. How did Jesus fulfill the Law? 5. What does verse 48 mean? 6. What is the character of the members of the Kingdom of Heaven? 7. Which of these lesson truths are not popular today? 8. Are the principles of the Sermon on the Mount practical for today?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

HOW JESUS BEGAN HIS MINISTRY

Beginning the Lesson

In the Sunday Schools of the London School Union the scholars are given

Christ and the Fishermen (*Zimmermann*)

written examinations and their papers are carefully marked just as are yours in your day schools. "How did Jesus call his first disciples?" was answered correctly by a boy who added, "They didn't stop for anything." The boy was right, for that was

just the way the four disciples answered Jesus' call. What word twice used in our text shows this? How did Jesus call his first disciples?

Follow Your Leader

There's a game which you all have played, no doubt. It is called Follow your Leader. How is it played? As a rule, what sort of course does the leader choose? What is your part in the game? Must you do this no matter how difficult the way? Do you know any animals that follow a leader? You have seen wild ducks swimming in a long line on a lake, and swerving around wherever their leader goes. There is a species of ants called pillar ants because they will travel round and round a pillar to no purpose whatever, each one following the one ahead. What is a "bell-wether"? Around the neck of a big sheep a bell is hung so that the other sheep can hear and follow him as he wanders about, and when the owner of the flock wishes to find them he needs only to listen for the bell, for they will all be together. The flock will follow him through a gap in the fence and on into mischief as readily as anywhere else.

At school there is generally some boy or girl who is a leader. He is not always the best scholar, nor the cleverest, but somehow he has more influence than anyone else. Why is his a very responsible position? If you are a follower, what should you do when your leader tries to lead you into doing something mean or base?

Who are the great leaders in our nation? In our church? What do you think of their responsibility? The best of leaders may make serious mistakes. Who is the only Leader whom we can follow who is always right? He says to us what he said to those disciples long ago, "Follow me." If we are Christians we will be his faithful followers, faithfully striving day by day to follow where he would have us go, to do the things he would have us do.

What Following Jesus Means

When Hugh Price Hughes was a young man, he heard a local preacher in a little church of London say, "I can't talk to you about sanctification and justification, but I know it all comes to this: submit to Christ." "Well, I can do that," said the lad, and he kept his resolve. This is what following Christ means. Many a one is perplexed about belief and self-surrender and the numerous other terms that are used to explain what is involved in becoming a disciple of Christ, who can learn in the same way that Mr. Hughes did, simply by beginning at once to live as nearly as he can in the way that a follower of Christ ought to live. How he ought to live he will learn by studying the life of his Leader. Peter and John and Andrew and James decided to follow Christ; they matriculated in his school when they left their nets and took the first step; they learned more and more of the meaning of Christian discipleship as they kept close to him; they did not graduate until they died.

"Lead me, Man divine,
Where'er Thou willst, only that I may find,
At the long journey's end, thy image there,
And grow more like to it."

Child, Follow Me!

"Child, follow me," the Master said,
As he knocked full loud at my chamber door;
But the morn was fair, and my heart was gay;
"I'll dally a while on the primrose way,
And I'll come," said I, "when the morning's o'er."

"Child, follow me," the Master said,
As he lingered patiently at the gate;
Gray shadows were falling, the night was near;
"Life's joys are so sweet, and my friends so dear,
I will come," said I, "when the night is late."

"Child, follow me," the Master cried,
As he walked away through the darkness deep;
And the night had fallen, and the birds were still;
"Linger," said I, "at the foot of the hill,
And I'll come when the world is hushed in sleep."

"Master, I come," I cried at length,
"Heart weary to serve at thine own dear side.
Thou hast called me long, but I come at last."
But mine eyes were dim and my strength was past,
And I could not follow the Crucified.—Unknown.

He Gave the Multitudes the Gospel They Wanted

Jesus fed the hungry, healed the sick, opened the ears of the deaf and the eyes of the blind, made the lepers clean, cast out demons, and raised the dead. Is it to be wondered at that, when these things were a result of the gracious words of Jesus, "the common people, or the great multitude, heard him gladly"? Would not great multitudes gladly hear one who declared good tidings, accompanied by such results, today?

Jesus began his good work among the needy in his land and day by giving to the multitude what they longed for, in order that they might be readier to receive what they needed more but did not yet long for.

Among all primitive peoples, among all peoples where Christianity in its best phases has not already done its fuller work and exercised its more beneficent influence, hunger widely prevails, and disease in various forms is a curse on young and old. In various countries of the East the longing for food and healing is general, if not universal, and whoever, as a stranger or as an incomer from outside, shows a kindly feeling toward the needy, is called a *hakeem*,—a wise man, a physician,—and is supposed to have power to give food and health. Therefore every Christian traveler in the East hears calls continually to give help as a *hakeem*. So must it have been in the days of Jesus.

In my first hour in Egypt as a traveler I thought that I saw more blind beggars, more children with sightless or sore eyes, more helpless cripples and half-naked creatures "full of sores" crouching at other men's gates, than I had ever seen in my life before. One of my companions, a medical student, was of the opinion that more than half of all the people he met in that land of darkness were blind or sore-eyed, or in some way diseased.

Crossing the Sinaitic desert I found that the Bedween who were my escort had for their daily food only a morsel of flour and water baked in the chalk of the desert as they stopped at night. When my personal party finished its meal, these Bedween picked up and devoured with avidity the scraps, including egg-shells, chicken bones, and crusts of bread. At one point, near Mt. Sinai, I saw a blind beggar sunning himself against a wall. I proffered him a juicy orange brought from Cairo, thinking it would be refreshing in the parched desert. As the poor man took it, my dragoman, or guide, suggested that the man would much prefer a crust of bread. The blind man was proffered the crust, as over against the orange, and asked which he would prefer. The orange was quickly yielded, and the crust clutched at. But, while bread was better than fruit, there was something more to be desired than that. The man turned up his sightless eyes, and, pointing to them with one hand, he reached out the crust with the other hand, and wanted to know if the *hakeem* would not give him sight instead of bread. Was not this an illustration of the longing of the people of the East among whom Jesus walked and worked, and of the value of his ministry to them in giving the gospel that they longed for?

A Christian missionary in any land has a duty to proclaim the gospel which the multitudes long for in their bodies, while he seeks opportunities to declare to them the gospel which their inner spirits need.

This was our Master's way. Why should it not be our way?—H. Clay Trumbull.

Sentence Sermons

Follow the Christ, the King.—Tennyson.

Christ's followers are those who are seeking to become what he was; his disciples are those who are trying to learn the art of right living from him.—George A. Gordon.

Questions for Pupils to Look up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What chapters of Matthew's Gospel record the Sermon on the Mount? 2. What special name has been given to the first ten verses of the fifth chapter? 3. What to you is happiness? 4. How is blessedness more than happiness? 5. Think about each verse of the Beatitudes and try to understand what each means. 6. Commit to memory the first chapter of the Sermon on the Mount.

STANDARDS OF THE KINGDOM

GOLDEN TEXT: Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Matthew 5.8

LESSON Matthew 5.1-48 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 24.1-6

MATTHEW 5.3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
6 Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.
7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.
9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God.

17 Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. 18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. 19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven, 20 For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

43 Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy: 44 but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; 45 that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. 46 For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? 47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others?* do not even the Gentiles the same? 48 Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE SCENE, verses 1, 2. Jewish rabbis usually sat while teaching, and Jesus followed the custom. Surrounded by his disciples, the Twelve and also others, he "opened his mouth and taught them," in Matthew's Hebraic statement—a solemn way of introducing words of great importance. See The Historical Background.

II. RECEIPTS FOR BLESSEDNESS, verses 3-10. Blessed: with this word each of these verses begins. We call them the Beatitudes, from *Beati,* Blessed, the word with which they begin in the Latin version. Blessedness is higher than happiness. Happiness may seem to depend upon circumstances: blessedness always depends upon relationship to God. "Blessedness is an infinitely higher and better thing than mere happiness," says a note in Weymouth's New Testament. "People who are blessed may outwardly be much pitied, but from the higher and truer standpoint they are to be admired, envied, congratulated and imitated."

And who are the blessed? The poor in spirit, said Jesus. Poor in spirit is in no sense poor-spirited; rather is it the truest manliness. The poor in spirit are the humble-minded, who are conscious of their need of God, those who, in Dr. George D. Boardman's words, "conscious, it may be, of great spiritual capacities, are at the same time conscious of great spiritual incompleteness, and therefore kneel at Heaven's gate for Heaven's supplies." Luke's version gives only "Blessed are ye poor," and a writer in the Expository Times explains that the two statements are one and the same, for "the poor" was a recognized term among the Jews for those who had dedicated themselves to the service of God. They were, for the most part, literally poor in this world's goods, but they possessed God, and having him they had attained blessedness. Blessedness depends not upon what one possesses, but upon what one is.

For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Notice that each Beatitude gives the reason. There are many definitions of the Kingdom of Heaven, or Kingdom of God. As it is used here we may think of it as having for its members the followers of Christ who obey his teachings and seek to further his ideals. The Sermon on the Mount, which has been called "The Constitution of the Kingdom of God," contains a generous portion of his great teachings.

"Only the noble think meanly of themselves. The soul of goodness is in the man who is really humble. A high ideal of life is beneath all. The poor

man passes into the blessedness of the Kingdom as soon as he realizes what a man is or ought to be. Poor in purse or even in character, no man is beggared who has a vision of man's chief end and man's chief good."

Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. All chastening seemeth for the moment to be not joyous but grievous; yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit into them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness, Hebrews 12.11. "The word translated *comforted* implies *strengthening* as well as *consolation.* The faculty which is exercised by the true mourner is strengthened by use. Those who bear their sorrows patiently grow in patience; those who sorrow for others grow in sympathy; those who sorrow for their own sin deepen their penitence; those who intercede for the sins of the world grow in the likeness of the Great Sin-Bearer and Intercessor. The comfort comes from the exercise of the spiritual faculty, and from the consciousness of growing more like God; but there is also that final comfort in the world to come, when 'God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes'" (Dummelow).

"Blessed are they that mourn! The words are not meant to put a premium on sorrow. They indicate the honor and value which attaches to the capacity for grief. Blessed are they who can and do mourn. When the humane man sees his mother becoming old and feeble his heart is saddened. When that dear companion of his childhood dies he mourns his loss. The Modoc Indian sees his mother growing old and he shuts her up in a hut until she starves to death, or he quickly strangles her. He then goes out hunting—he does not mourn. Blessed are they that have capacity for sorrow" (Charles R. Brown).

Blessed are the meek. The virtue of meekness is far from being a passive one. Only a strong person can be a truly meek person. The Greek word for *meek* is the same one which in Xenophon's Anabasis is used for taming of wild horses. A meek man is a tamed man, one who has himself in perfect control under any and every provocation. The meek are the self-controlled. A meek man does not lack force and fire and power, but he controls these good qualities and uses them for right purposes. The meek are also self-forgetful and teachable.

The Jews were looking forward to inheriting the earth in a literal sense: when the Messiah should come they expected him to rule all lands. How strange it must have sounded to the disciples to hear Jesus proclaim that the meek shall inherit the earth, to hear such a reward promised to the possessor of a virtue, not to the doer of a deed! But they knew that the inheritance which Jesus meant was spiritual rather than material. However, Dr. A. B. Bruce contends that meekness is a power even in this world and cites the case of the meek in England driven from their native land by religious intolerance, who have inherited the continent of America.

"Who owns the mountains? The man who has a deed to the land? Rather, the man who appreciates the mountains. The saints own the earth in that they see the spiritual significance of life and are masters of life" (W. J. McConnell).

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness. The metaphor here means these that eagerly desire righteousness. "Hunger is a recurring manifestation of physical health. The invalid loses desire for food, but with returning health commences to desire and enjoy it. So it is also in the moral and spiritual realm. Hunger for the highest, for the best and truest life is itself a sign of saving relationship with God. The man who has no hunger and is conscious of no needs has neither knowledge of himself nor of God" (J. Stuart Holden).

They that hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled. A puny child was brought to a London hospital for treatment, and on his arrival the nurse gave him a glass of milk. Before lifting the glass to his lips, the little fellow asked anxiously, "How deep may I drink, Miss?" How much that question told of the poverty of a home when a glass had to be shared among several! How deep may we drink in our thirst after righteousness? We shall be filled with righteousness.

Blessed are the merciful, the compassionate, those whose hearts are touched by the tragedy of human misery and who do all in their power to alleviate it. Recall Micah 6.8. For they shall obtain mercy. This recalls the later word of Jesus: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you. If you give mercy, you shall receive mercy—from your fellow men in a measure and from God in abundance.

"The mistake of the Christian world is that men expect to have the Beatitudes without fulfilling the conditions attached to them. How often do we pray that we may have the Kingdom of Heaven without thinking that we shall first be poor in spirit! How often do we pray for mercy without first seeking to be merciful! How often do we expect to be filled because we hunger and thirst, when we have never made sure that what we hunger and thirst for is real righteousness!" (Henry Drummond).

Blessed are the pure in heart. The pure in heart are the true, those whom every kind of goodness attracts. "Purity of heart, which is just loving and thinking the best, is the door of character; for we live out of our meditations, our dreams, and our desires. If these are stained, then life is, as it were, a poisoned spring from which there flows nothing but poisoned waters. If these are pure, all the currents of life are pure" (Gaius Glenn Atkins). As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he, and thoughts that are pure, sincere, guileless, lead to acts that are upright, true, Christlike.

For they shall see God, have fellowship with him. Only the pure in heart have the capacity for seeing God. To the hardened sinner, to the indifferent, to the heedless, God cannot reveal himself, for they cannot grasp divine revelation. The secret of the Lord is only with them that fear him.

"'I do not see thee, God!' a soul made plaint;
'O for an angel hand to tear the veil apart;
Hide not from me thy face, I strive, I faint!'
The silence whispered, 'Art thou pure in heart?'"

Blessed are the peacemakers. Not merely the "peaceable men," as Wycliffe translates, but "the maintainers of peace," as in Tyndale's Version. "Everyone who follows Christ is a peacemaker."

A Frenchwoman announces herself as an "artiste stoppeur." She is nothing more nor less than an artist at stopping holes—one who darns and patches in the most approved way. Peacemakers are artists in stopping all things that disturb the peace, whether like Isaac of old who prevented friction by quietly moving on and digging new wells, or like the statesmen who are engaged in trying to create a lasting peace among nations.

"Thrice blessed are they who make strife cease,
And all their lives are making peace."

For they shall be called sons of God. Put side by side with this the words spoken to Jesus, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," and the words of Paul (Rom. 8.14), "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the Sons of God."

Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are they who, undaunted by threat or peril, endure to the end, for righteousness' sake. It is not the persecution, but the advancing righteousness at whatever cost that makes one blessed.

"The cause, not the pain, makes the martyr" (Augustine).

III. THE INFLUENCE OF DISCIPLES IN THE WORLD, verses 13-16.

IV. THE POSITION OF JESUS AS REGARDS THE LAW, verses 17-20. The threefold division of the Hebrew Bible was into the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings, and Jesus is here referring to the Old Testament Scriptures. Verses 20-48 are a series of illustrations of the way in which he would have the law and the prophets fulfilled, filled completely, for he would have his followers in order to be really righteous go much farther than the Old Testament law required. He held the law to be right as far as it went, but would have one regard the spirit or the motive of every act.

The general tenor of the whole chapter is not in harmony with verses 18 and 19 in which the least Old Testament commandment is regarded as of permanent worth and not to be disobeyed in the slightest degree. Many commentators believe that these verses should not be found in this context. Shall we regard them as hyperbolical expressions intended to show the respect in which Jesus held the Old Testament writings?

Moffatt's translation of verse 18 reads: I tell you truly, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a comma, will pass from the law until it is all in force. *Iota* is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet; the *tittle* is the projecting point in some of the letters: "both representing the minutiæ in the Mosaic legislation."

"The paradoxes of Jesus have a strange simplicity and sincerity. They grow out of the very nature of life itself. Viewed in one way, the past is something to which you are to be completely and unhesitatingly loyal. Viewed in another, the past is something which is to be changed. Not the dot of an 'i' or the cross of a 't' is to be changed, and yet 'Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time . . . but I say unto you.'

"Once and again we have all been amazed by the fashion in which the clear thrust of Jesus proves its adequacy in the terms of situations and relationships far away from those which inspired the words which he uttered. It is so with regard to his interpretations of the antinomies which emerge when one considers the past. On the one hand, there is the organic view of life, which emphasizes continuity and the right of the past to impress its deepest sense of order upon the world today. Not one real meaning emerging from past experience must be treated lightly. On the other hand, there is the dynamic view of life with its call for daring adventure and creative initiative. And unless life is to become rigid and sterile we must keep the sense of creative adventure alive in the world. In its name we must follow Jesus when he says, 'Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time . . . but I say unto you.' And we must not put the organic and the dynamic conceptions against each other. We must have both" (Lynn Harold Hough).

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: he is in class one, according to Dr. Bruce, that set aside the least commandments for the sake of the great. But whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven: he is in class two that conscientiously did all, great and small. Class three, the scribes and Pharisees, set aside the great for the sake of the letter, the ethical for the sake of the ritual, the divine for the sake of the traditional, and that threw them outside the kingdom altogether.

V. THE POSITION OF JESUS AS REGARDS THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT AND THE SIN OF ANGER, verses 21-26.

VI. THE POSITION OF JESUS AS REGARDS THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT AND DIVORCE, verses 27-32.

VII. THE POSITION OF JESUS AS REGARDS OATHS, verses 33-37.

VIII. THE POSITION OF JESUS AS REGARDS THE LAW OF COMPENSATION, verses 38-42.

IX. THE POSITION OF JESUS AS REGARDS THE LAW OF LOVE, verses 43-48. Ye have heard that it was said (to them of old time, verses 21, 33), Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. Leviticus 19.18 contains the first part of the saying. The second part was added by the Jewish expounders of the law (for which Dt. 23.6 may have been the excuse); for they held that an enemy was not a neighbor, that Gentiles were enemies, and that only Israelites should be loved. The Romans believed in loving neighbors and hating enemies, as witnessed by the epitaph on Sulla's monument at Rome: "No friend ever did so much good, or enemy so much harm, but I repaid him with interest."

Then Jesus declared his law to be, Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you. This you must do if you would be sons of your Father who is in heaven, like him in bestowing good on all alike: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil as well as on the good, and he sendeth his rain on the unjust as well as on the just. Love given for love is only a glorified selfishness. Even the publicans (the tax-collectors appointed by the Roman government) love those who love them. What reward (what thanks, Luke 6.32) have ye? What reward do you merit? You are unprofitable servants: you have done that which it was your duty to do.

What do ye more than others, if ye salute your brethren only, do not even the Gentiles the same? "If you only salute your friends, what is special about that? Do not the very pagans do as much?" is Moffatt's translation. To salute another

does not indicate with us much regard for him, but in the East it has more significance and is evidently used here by Jesus as indicative of friendly regard.

That was a splendid illustration of how to treat an enemy which Abraham Lincoln gave when as a lawyer he was called to state a case in opposition to Edwin M. Stanton. Stanton referred to him as "that long-armed baboon," and in many other insulting remarks hard for a man to bear, but Lincoln in his turn referred to his opponent with the utmost courtesy.

In this matter of love you must imitate God; ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. *Perfect* means *complete*. Do not merely perform some duties, such as prayer and alms-giving, and neglect other duties, such as charity in judgment and kindness to enemies: omit none, even as God omits none. "The Savior, I suppose," said Abraham Lincoln, "did not expect that any human being would be perfect as the Father in heaven; but he set this up as a standard, and he who did most toward reaching that standard attained the highest degree of moral perfection."

"Until a man knows Jesus Christ, he has little chance of ever guessing the grandness of which he himself is capable."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven, verse 3. Contrast with this the rabbinical parallel cited in the One Volume Commentary: "Ever be more and more lowly in spirit, since the expectancy of men is to become the food of worms."

I came not to destroy but to fulfil, verse 27. The Jews had many fulfillers, interpreters of the law. A prominent Jewish rabbi recently said: "If any man should attempt to live his life on the lines of the Old Testament alone, his religion would strike us as so odd that I doubt whether we would recognize him as a Jew at all. Our religion is based on the Old Testament, as it was expounded and developed by the great Jews who lived and worked in the centuries after it was completed. The cleverest and the best men among them spent all their strength in making clear the difficulties of the book. They understood its language in a degree which was impossible to anyone else. Whatever was hidden they brought to light. They added their own precious thoughts to the sacred word."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

To the words of the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of Matthew Augustine gave the name of The Sermon on the Mount. It has been suggested that a more fitting title would be The Teaching on the Hill, for it seems to be a combination of several lessons, a summary of all the talks of Jesus during a sojourn in Galilee of some duration, rather than a set discourse delivered in a single hour or day. Many of its words are given in the other Synoptic Gospels in different connections.

Another suggested title is that of The Gospel of the Kingdom. The fifth chapter treats of the character which the King wishes the members to possess; of the influence of the members upon the world; gives an interpretation of the Law; declares the works of righteousness; emphasizes the need of singleness of service; and gives a test of true discipleship.

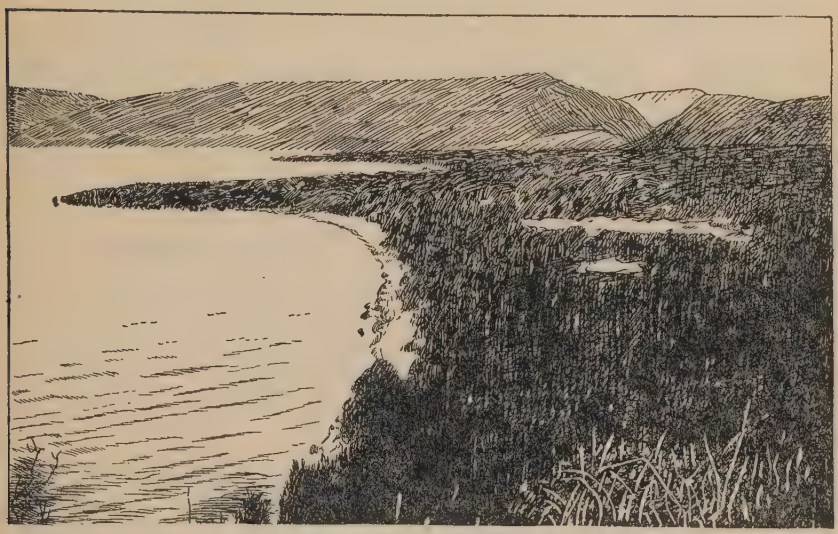
Blackstone, the great authority on law, declared that the principles of all wise legislative measures enacted among all the civilized nations of the earth are found in this discourse. Burke declared that the most impressive political document on the rights of man is in the Sermon on the Mount. The beauty and simplicity of its language as well as the comprehensiveness of its scope have always been recognized.

Where the "mountain" was it is not possible to say. It may have been Mount Tabor or any of the hills near the Sea of Galilee. Tradition has given the name of "The Mount of Beatitudes" to Kurn Hattin, or the Horns of Hattin, about five miles west of the Lake.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

The Sermon on the Mount contains sixty different pictures and symbols, many of which are incorrectly understood by many people. We have three lessons taken from this Sermon. You will find it profitable each week to find out in the beginning

of the period how your pupils are interpreting the text. Do not start out with your explanations, but get your pupils' ideas first of all. Then you can proceed to alter or enhance their views. Thus you will induce them to think, arouse their interest in your contributions to the lesson, and make a far more lasting impression upon them than you would if you "developed" the lesson wholly from your own standpoint.



The Shore of the Sea of Galilee

The small hill in the background is called Kurn Hattin, or the Mount of the Beatitudes

Today lead your pupils to give expression to the great truth that happiness depends not so much upon what they have and do, as upon what they are.

If Intermediate and Senior pupils cannot be induced to commit to memory the entire Sermon, as suggested in Questions for Pupils, urge them to memorize at least our lesson texts each week.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

A CHRISTIAN ACCORDING TO CHRIST

Beginning the Lesson

Israel Zangwill once declared that the only real Christians were the Jews, meaning that so few Christians live up to the standard which Christ set that they should not be called Christians. Zangwill believed that in many respects Christ's standard was an utterly impossible one. Arnold Bennett, in one of his books, writes: "The oftener I read The Sermon on the Mount, the more deeply I am convinced that here is the final, *practical* wisdom. I disagree with the view that Christ's moral teaching will not stand the test of modern conditions." With which one of these writers do you agree?

Can all the principles of righteousness proclaimed in this fifth chapter be put into practice? Can we in our land and our day live according to Christ's standards?

It is a Matter of First Importance to the Christian to Get the Point of View of Jesus

The right development of Christian character is dependent in a large measure upon this all-important thing. Jesus was constantly running counter to the popular

judgments of his day, and it is true in this day that much of his teaching seems to many people wholly impracticable.

One day Jesus said a strange word about meekness—a quality of mind and heart that was not exactly an epidemic at that time. The people looked on with wonderment when he declared, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." They probably said it was an absurd statement, and one having the wisdom that Jesus claimed to possess should not have made it. To whom do the prizes belong? To those who secure them, whether they are worthy of them or otherwise. Ask the question on the street, in the busy turmoil of life, and the answer will be, what? To the meek? Not at all. To the strong, the cunning, the crafty—these are they who will inherit all things. Thus speaks the world. But the world is wrong, as it always has been. And Christ is right—right because he gave utterance in that sentence of his to one of the deep, fundamental principles of all existence—the meek inherit all things, all appearances to the contrary notwithstanding.

Who acquires knowledge in school? The pupil who is proud and is sure of himself, who thinks that he knows as much as his instructors; or the one who with openness of mind is willing to be taught? Who makes headway in scientific research, the one who makes bold assertions and will not budge from them, or the one who is willing to sit at the feet of nature and be taught of her? To ask these questions is to answer them. The greater the spirit of real and genuine meekness, all other things being equal, the greater the prizes that await man.

But Christ spoke spiritually when he gave utterance to these words. And how true they are! That which they convey to us is that out of a willingness to learn of him who is meek and lowly of heart there comes real spiritual power. We inherit power to resist temptation, power to overcome evil, power to grow in grace, and the final "power of the resurrection."—Editorial in The Christian Advocate.

A Christian is Blessed rather than Happy

When, in the ancient world, the question was asked, What is the chief end of man or the highest good? the answer to it was practically unanimous—that it is happiness. "Since all knowledge and all purpose," says Aristotle, "aim at some good, what is the highest of all realizable goods? As to its name, I suppose, nearly all men are agreed, for the masses and the men of culture alike declare that it is happiness." Against this, indeed, the Stoics in the ancient world protested; and some have protested in modern times—Carlyle, for example, who was never tired of pouring scorn on this idea. To him the notion, taken for granted, as he would have said, in every foolish brain, that anyone needs to be happy, or has any natural right to happiness, is the most colossal of all blunders. Men are miserable, he argued, because they entertain exorbitant notions of their own deserts, and they are astonished when nature does not agree with them. But let them take it for granted that they deserve nothing, and then they will be delighted with the slightest enjoyments. "Fancy," says he, "thou deservest to be hanged (as is most likely), thou wilt feel it happiness to be only shot; fancy thou deservest to be hanged in a hair-halter, it will be a luxury to die in hemp." At the time when such sentiments were expressed by the sardonic philosopher, there was good reason for them in the condition of philosophy and the tendencies of the public mind. But the desire for happiness is too deep-seated and truly natural to be argued away by any eloquence. Jesus, ever true to nature, acknowledged this as one of the primordial forces of our being, and endeavored to enlist it among the motives of goodness. Only he employed the word "blessed" in the place of "happy"—a simple yet a radical change; for blessedness is a happiness pure and spiritual, reaching down to the profoundest elements of human nature and reaching forth to the illimitable developments of eternity.—James Stalker, in The Ethic of Jesus.

Standards of The Beatitudes

Three times the Lord blesses discontent, when he praises the poor, the sad, and the hungry, and promises that they shall be satisfied presently. These conditions are the opposite of self-conceit. The blessing is upon the humble-minded, who have no idea that they know it all, but are honestly desirous to improve themselves. They have aspirations and ideals, they are looking forward to something and hoping and working to attain it. Twice he blesses service. Blessed are the merciful, who are engaged in the abolition of pain. It means physicians who are contending with disease, and reformers who are fighting the battles of the weak against the selfish-

ness and cruelty of the strong. And blessed are the peacemakers who are engaged in the abolition of strife and hatred. It means lawyers who are trying to defend people against injustice; and all others, old and young, who endeavor to bring about a better understanding, to stop fighting and to reconcile enemies. Once he blesses sincerity, when he praises the pure in heart. These are they who are without hypocrisy, and who habitually speak the truth. To be faithful to one's own convictions, to be loyal to one's ideals; under difficulty, in the midst of adverse circumstances, in a minority, to maintain the right—it is one of the most difficult and one of the most heroic of occupations. Once he blesses constancy, when he praises those who are persecuted. They would not be persecuted if they were willing to submit. Once he blesses meekness. But that virtue does not consist in quietness and silence, in folded hands and downcast eyes, and in the prudent quality of having no opinions of one's own. The briefest reading in the life of Moses will contradict that common error. The "meekest man," as he was described in the New England Primer, was meek in that he did not contend for his own rights, he was not self-seeking nor self-assertive; but the people over whom he ruled were made aware of his strength of will every day he lived.—George Hodges, in The Training of Children in Religion.

Ye therefore shall be Perfect as your Heavenly Father is Perfect

Undoubtedly there is a certain advantage in having one's ideals not too high and discouraging, in having them right there before you, plain and somewhat easily possible. To have the place you are going to just over the hill a little way helps to keep you in heart and hope, but to picture the road before you up and up and up and ending you know not where has a tendency to dishearten. Yes, perhaps it is better to be somewhat reasonable and sensibly content even in the matter of the ideals that we cherish and in the things we plan to be and to do.

And yet in that way, too, there does seem to lurk not a little danger. Very many of the failures that men have made, the real failures touching the supreme issues and ambitions of life, have had not a little of their explanation, when a careful study is made, in a too-commonplace ideal and an aim that could be easily satisfied. The destination that is just over the hill; the fine deed that is easily possible to us; the ambition that overnight can be attained unto—somehow these things, just because they make so little demand of us, and call for so little courage and devotion, are almost less likely to be realized than if they asked very much more. And if high ideals seem sometimes to mock and discourage us, the fact is that often they are quite as easy to attain unto as are the low and common ones.

It was one of the outstanding and altogether remarkable things about Jesus that, with all his understanding of human frailty and weakness and all his sympathy for men and women who so easily go astray and fail to achieve, he wasn't given to making the right life seem too easy or of pulling down the standard just because reaching up to it was difficult. He was always telling men and women to love their enemies; to do the kind and friendly deed to those who hated and despised them; to turn the other cheek when the one had had a stinging blow; to go the second mile when they really were under no particular obligation to go the first, and to do a whole host of things that were quite impossible to any man unless he was a saint and hero quite beyond what most men are. And somehow we have a feeling that the reason why he helped men so much toward high and noble living was because he ever kept before them these staggering ideals and lured them on toward the things that seemed impossible. And we cannot but conclude that he was the great Master Teacher in this, and that he knew full well that easy moralities and cheap ambitions and commonplace ideals never lead men and women up any way of noble living and high achievement.—Editorial in The New Outlook.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Duty, sources, secret, art and grades of happiness. See Happiness by Hugh Black ($1.50).

2. The moral ideals of the Jews in the time of Jesus. How Jesus changed men's thoughts about goodness. See Chapter V of Five Young Men, by Charles R. Brown ($1.00); pages 253-270 of Paterson-Smyth's People's Life of Christ; Chapter VII of Christianity and Social Problems, by Lyman Abbott ($2.00).

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Make an analysis of Chapter VI. 2. What verse sums up the teaching of the whole lesson? 3. What is meant by "vain repetitions"? 4. Since God knows our need before we ask (verse 8), why should we mention our wants in our prayers? 5. How do you explain the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer? 6. The sixth? 7. What reasons for not worrying does Jesus give?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

ACCEPTING AND FOLLOWING THE HIGHEST IDEALS

Beginning the Lesson

Suppose you had been one of the crowd of people sitting on a Galilean hillside some late afternoon, listening to this Man who was the center of all interest to the northern countryfolk that year. Suppose you had never really thought very much before. Why should you! You saw no books nor papers, your only mental training had been to turn, for all knowledge and wisdom, to the older people of your town, especially the priests.

Then came the Young Teacher. There he sits on a rock on the hillside, in his blue and white garment, an out-of-door Person, a friendly Person, with a great charm which draws your heart as you look over the heads of your neighbors. Just another Rabbi, but how strangely he talks! Instead of hair-splitting argument, he is telling the people stories—stories about homely, familiar things that you love to hear talked about, with plenty of color and symbolism, but something about each of them that appeals to your sense of reason, too. Strange new ideas are there which he seems to be telling you, ideas from topsy-turvy land, as that your inconspicuous life matters as much as that of one of the priests or rulers; that the things which you can see and touch count less than certain invisible treasures of the spirit; that the way you have always secretly looked down on that neighbor sitting yonder may be as wrong as if you had actually hurt him; that the pair of doves you took to the temple last week did not necessarily change God's feelings about you.

You never heard anyone talk like this before, but there is something very humanly convincing about this Man. The questions about life which you have always kept in the back of your mind before this, stir a good deal more strongly, some of the hard-and-fast rules of the scribes go scattering off as dead leaves before a fresh young wind. You walk slowly homeward along the shore of the lake, wondering perhaps about the difference between letting other people do your thinking for you, and this queer new process of doing it for yourself. (These very suggestive thoughts are from Studies in Knowing Jesus Christ, by Helen Thoburn.)

And now let us hear what has been your own thinking about the words of Jesus in that Sermon on the Mount. Do you know why we call his first words about blessedness The Beatitudes? What do you think Jesus meant when he said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit"? (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

What Is It to Be a Christian?

I suppose if I were to ask people if they were Christians, some of them would say, "Why, I am trying to do the right thing." They think that to be a Christian is to try to do the right thing. That is true. A Christian is a person who wants to do right. He wants to do right above everything else in this world. As Jesus puts it, he "hungers and thirsts after righteousness." If he must go hungry to be right, he will go hungry. If he must be poor to be right, he will be poor. If he must suffer to be right, he will suffer.

But to want to do right is not all of being a Christian. There is the question whether we understand what we want to do aright. What is a good man like? What is it to be good?

Now, of course, the only thing that can show us just what a good man is like is a good man. Where is there a man good enough to show us just what a good man is like?

In Athens, four hundred years before Christ, lived a man by the name of Socrates. He spent his time in teaching the people how to be good, and he was honest and courageous. I suppose he was the best man who ever lived in Greece. Still, he was sometimes coarse, and he did not seem to care much for his wife and children. We should hardly want to take him for a model.

In China lived Confucius, about two hundred years earlier. He, too, was a good man, the best, perhaps, there ever was in China, and he wrote some very good books; but he knew nothing about God, nothing about love to all men, nothing about humility and self-sacrifice. Confucius will not do to tell us all a good man ought to be. So in India there was Buddha, but he thought life was all wrong, and the best thing was for us to cease to be.

There was only one Man good enough to show us just what a good man ought to be, and that Man was Jesus Christ. To be a Christian is to be trying to be good and right like Jesus.

But there is another question about doing anything, and that is whether we have the skill and power to do it; and if we do not have it in ourselves, whether we can get it in someone else. No man can lift a ton, but he can get a machine that will lift it for him, by the power of steam or of electricity. No man could build a steamship alone, but he can get many men to work with him and help him.

Now, men are never so weak and helpless as when they are trying to do the right just for themselves. The fact is, no one ever succeeded in doing it, and no one ever will, except Jesus. And Jesus not only shows us just what being good is, but he is living still to help us to do the good. He can furnish just the power we need. So to be a Christian is to be right, like Jesus Christ, and with his help.—William H. Walker, in Five Minutes with the Boys' and Girls' Congregation.

What Jesus Wishes his Followers to Be

Let us repeat the Beatitudes in a little different words, which bring out their meaning:

"Happy are they who feel the need of God's help; for God is in their hearts.

"Happy are they who regret their sins and shortcomings; for God will forgive their sins and comfort them.

"Happy are they who are willing to let others have first place; for God will take care that they shall have greatest power.

"Happy are they who earnestly pray and live for the right; for God will fill them with his own righteousness.

"Happy are they who are kind and forgiving toward others; for they have favor with God and with men.

"Happy are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.

"Happy are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God.

"Happy are they who are troubled by others because they do right; for God is in their hearts.

"Happy are you when others speak bitterly against you and trouble you and tell lies about you, because you serve me."—Gerritt Verkuyl, in Scripture Memory Work.

Sentence Sermons

These lessons thou dost give
To teach me how to live,
To do, to bear,
To get, to share,
To work, to play,
And trust always.—Maltbie D. Babcock.

"Instead of trying so hard, as some of us do, to be happy, as if it were the sole purpose of life, I would, if I were a boy again, try still harder to deserve happiness."

Nae treasures, nor pleasures,
Could make us happy lang;
The heart's ay, the part ay,
That makes us right or rang.—Robert Burns.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Commit to memory the entire lesson. 2. In what way were Ananias and Sapphira like the hypocrites of verse 5? 3. For what does the "inner chamber" stand? 4. How many petitions are there in the Lord's Prayer? 5. Which put God first? 6. How many petitions are not for some spiritual blessing? 7. Read Luke 12.15-21 and tell what verses in our lesson it illustrates. 8. What is Jesus' lesson from the birds? From the flowers? 9. What does our Golden Text mean?

PUTTING GOD'S KINGDOM FIRST

GOLDEN TEXT: Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Matthew 6.33

LESSON Matthew 6.1-34 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 145.1, 2, 7-13

MATTHEW 6.5 And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward. 6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee. 7 And in praying use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. 8 Be not therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. 9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil *one*.

19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21 for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also.

31 Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need for all these things. 33 But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. GENUINE CHARITY, verses 1-4. "Ye therefore must be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect" are the closing words of Chapter V of Matthew, our lesson of last week. The citizens of the new kingdom must excel the scribes and Pharisees in righteousness. Matthew next records Jesus' words about almsgiving, prayer, and fasting—three forms of good works of which the Pharisees boasted. Jesus emphasized the fact that righteousness is a transaction between man and his Heavenly Father, and into it no thought of what others may say or think should enter. Almsgiving, charity, that is genuine will not be given in order to receive the praise of men.

"By thy unsparing denunciation of pretense, create in me a hatred of all sham, all insincerity" (Hester Alway).

II. GENUINE PRAYER, verses 5-8. The Jews had certain times for prayer, and wherever a man was when the prayer hour arrived, there he stood and prayed. Some there were, hypocrites, Jesus called them, who deliberately planned to be found at prayer time in conspicuous places in synagogues, or at street corners. It was the appearance of righteousness that they coveted, not the righteousness itself; they sought to gain a reputation for piety just as Ananias and Sapphira tried to gain a reputation for generosity and self-sacrifice when they were far from possessing either quality.

"Some people go into restless extravagance in order to be seen of men as rich; and the average person would rather be seen to have certain qualities than actually to possess them. Many a refined woman would rather nourish a secret sin than be discovered in a slight open breach of etiquette. We all incline to the Pharisaic preference of a good reputation to deeply religious character" (H. S. Brewster).

Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward. The Greek word means *received in full,* and is the one used in drawing up receipts. They have received the full reward which they sought, they have been seen of men, they have no claim whatsoever to any further reward.

You can best talk to your Father in heaven when you are by yourself. When you pray, counseled Jesus, shut out the world and shut yourself in with God—enter into thine inner chamber, your secret place where you can be alone with

God, and having shut the door, pray to your Father who is in secret. For Nathanael the place for prayer was under the fig-tree; for Peter it was on the housetop. Jesus himself made the mountainside and the garden his closet, the places where he could have privacy to commune with God. Jesus is not disparaging public prayer, which he elsewhere commends; he is emphasizing the test of sincerity which private prayer affords.

"It is not difficult to shut the door of our chamber, but it is far from easy to close the mind upon secular images and feelings" (W. L. Watkinson).

And thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.

"Much prayer means much power, little prayer means little power, no prayer means no power" (J. Stuart Holden).

In praying use no vain repetitions, empty words that mean nothing to you, mere pious phrases devoid of all heart and faith and purpose. The accent here is upon the word *vain.* Compare the vain repetitions of the priests in their worship of Baal, 1 Kings 18.20, and of the Ephesians in their worship of Diana, Acts 19.34. Babble not much, is Tyndale's translation. The Gentiles think that they shall be heard for their much speaking: be not like them by repeating words which you do not mean. Compare the rabbinical saying, "Prolix prayer prolongeth life."

"When thou prayest, rather let thy heart be without words than thy words without heart" (Bunyan).

"Prayer must mean something to us if it is to mean anything to God" (Maltbie D. Babcock).

For your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. We do not pray for the sake of telling God our needs: we pray that we may open our hearts to him, may have a realizing sense of communion with him as his children, and may receive from him the inspirations and aspirations which he gives to those who pray aright.

"Just because of God's perfect knowledge and love, the Master seems to say, Pray with confidence. Do not think that you can add to God's information about your need or can inspire in him an increased good will by your petition. You cannot. He knows your need in advance and is more willing to give than you are to take. But one thing you can do, you can open the way for God to do what he wants to do" (Harry Emerson Fosdick).

III. THE MODEL PRAYER, verses 9-15. After this manner therefore pray ye: this does not mean that the prayer which follows is the only prayer pleasing to God, nor that it should always form part of one's prayer. It means that the prayer given is a model for all prayer in that it deals with divine and with human interests, with spiritual more than with physical wants. It contains what we are prone to forget when we commune with God. There are six petitions in this prayer. The first three put God first: they refer to him, his kingdom, his will.

"What is the value of prayer conceived as petition? It is practically and psychologically necessary for developing and expressing our sense of dependence on God, and this is one of the essential factors of religion. As the religious life grows, we may change the nature of our petitions. We may pass from particular requests to more inclusive spiritual prayer, but in general, petition will always remain an element of our human prayers" (Borden P. Bowne).

Our Father, thus the prayer begins: it is a very good name for God, as little Joe says in Bleak House. The word *our* proclaims our brotherhood one with another as well as God's fatherhood to all. Our Father, who art in heaven. "This is more, shall I say, than God's postal address. Heaven is spoken of in the Bible as the place of dominion and authority; 'The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens,' says the Psalmist, 'and his kingdom ruleth over all.' Our Father is in the place of supreme dominion; love rules the universe" (J. D. Jones).

Hallowed, treated as holy, reverenced, rightly worshiped, be thy name, thyself, thy revealed Nature. The petition asks that we may honor the Father in thought and life. There is a false boldness, as Luther observed, which talks to God "as a man might talk to a cobbler's lad."

"If our smallest human spirit has its holy of holies that may not be inconsiderately violated, how much more must deep reverence characterize all our thought of God!"

Thy Kingdom come, let thy sovereignty be realized as in heaven, so on earth. When every one's will is in as perfect accord with God's will as was the will of Jesus, then God's Kingdom will be established on earth as in heaven.

"If you do not wish his kingdom to come, don't pray for it; but if you do wish for it, you must do more than pray for it—you must work for it" (Ruskin).

Give us this day our daily bread. In this petition we ask for a supply sufficient for this day's need: it precludes anxious thought for the morrow. It asks also for a supply for our brother's need, and implies that we will help furnish that supply.

"I thank thee, Lord, for strength of arm
To win my bread,
And that beyond my need is meat
For friend unfed.
I thank thee much for bread to live;
I thank thee more for bread to give."

And forgive us our debts, sins, as we also have forgiven our debtors. Does this mean that God's grace is measured by our own? It means that until we have the spirit which forgives, we have not the spirit which can be forgiven.

If it were possible to receive love from God and give out hatred to men; if we could be joyous toward him and sullen toward our neighbors; if we could accept from him sunshine and tenderness while we radiate annoyance and hostility toward our fellow men, then we might receive forgiveness and be unforgiving.

And bring us not into temptation. God does not lead us into temptation, but he permits us to be brought into temptation. The word *temptation* has here its earlier meaning of testing, trying, as has the root-word still in our word *attempt*. The thought is that God has so ordered this world that we are brought into circumstances which try our characters, put us to the test. In this petition we ask to be spared testings that would be too hard, to be saved from trials which we cannot stand, and in it, too, we express our trust that when we are assailed by temptations God will give us the strength to withstand them.

But deliver us from the evil one. The Authorized Version reads *evil*, not *evil one*. The two Greek words, *τοῦ πονηροῦ* may be either masculine or neuter, and may therefore be translated either *the evil one* (masculine) or *the evil* (neuter). Orientals think of evil as personified and the Revisers have preferred *the evil one*. As we naturally think of evil in the abstract, *the evil* would seem for us the preferable rendering.

"No man can utter this petition without conscious or unconscious hypocrisy who is helping to create the temptations in which others are sure to fall. The words 'Deliver us from the evil one' have the ring of battle. They bring to mind the incessant battle between God and permanent and malignant powers of evil humanity" (Walter Rauschenbusch).

IV. GENUINE FASTING, verses 16-18. When fasting, the hypocrites disfigured their faces and went about with long countenances, to be seen of men. Followers of Jesus should not parade their feelings, but should make them known to God who seeth in secret.

It is not piety, but self-righteousness that is wrong. As some one has remarked, what makes the rooster unpopular is not his getting up early in the morning—which is an excellent habit—but his continual crowing about it. What was wrong with the Pharisee was not his fasting, but his ostentatious way about it. There is always peril lest one fall into this same fault. Jesus would have us of that company of whom Lowell speaks—

The bravely dumb who did their deed,
And scorned to blot it with a name;
Men of the plain, heroic breed,
Who loved Heaven's silence more than fame.

V. WORLDLINESS AND TRUST, verses 19-21. It is a peculiarity of the Hebrew style, we are told, often occurring in Scripture, to make an absolute statement to be understood relatively. So here, when Jesus bids us lay not up for ourselves treasures upon the earth, his statement is to be taken relatively: he is not speaking against wise provision for the future here on earth, but is contrasting the value of earthly and heavenly things. Rather than avariciously to store up treasures on earth, which may be destroyed by moth or rust or stolen by thieves, he counsels us to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven, which are indestructible.

"Before the Ender comes, whose charioteer
Is swift or slow Disease, lay up each year
Thy harvest of well-doing, wealth that kings
Nor thieves can take away. When all the things
Thou callest thine—goods, pleasure, honors—fall,
Thou in thy virtue shall survive them all" (Whittier).

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also, and your heart must be fixed on God alone. "The heart follows the treasure as the needle follows the loadstone, or the sunflower the sun" (Matthew Henry).

VI. CONCERNING ANXIETY, verses 25-32, 34. Five times in ten verses here Jesus says, "Be not anxious." The Authorized Version reads, "Take no thought," because at the time that translation was made the words included the idea of anxiety, and meant "take no anxious thought." He who gives life will give the lesser things, food and raiment. Take a lesson from the birds, Jesus counsels; they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and your Heavenly Father feedeth them. It is not idleness nor want of forethought that Jesus commends in the birds, but their freedom from anxious care. Birds build their nests, rear their young, and make their annual flights to warmer climes but, as a statement issued by the United States Public Health Service reminds us, "So far as known, no bird ever tried to build more nests than its neighbors; no fox ever fretted because he had only one hole in which to hide; no squirrel ever died of anxiety lest he should not lay by enough nuts for two winters instead of one, and no dog ever lost any sleep over the fact that he did not have enough bones laid aside for his declining years."

Jesus next points out the waste of worry. Did fretting ever mend anything or lessen any trouble? Which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life? "Millions of money for an inch of time!" exclaimed Queen Elizabeth when dying. "I would give two hundred millions of dollars right now, if I could be absolutely assured of ten more years of life," said Andrew Carnegie.

Now comes a lesson from the flowers. Why are you anxious about your raiment? All of Solomon's glory was as nothing compared with the beauty of the common flowers that neither toil nor spin. Shall God not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

"By the faith that the flowers show when they bloom unbidden,
By the calm of the river's flow to a goal that is hidden,
By the trust of the tree that clings to its deep foundation,
By the courage of wild birds' wings on the long migration,
(Wonderful secret of peace that abides in Nature's breast!)
Teach me how to confide, and live my life, and rest" (Henry van Dyke).

Be not therefore anxious about food or drink or clothing, for which the nations are seeking, for you are children of a Heavenly Father who knows that you have need of all these things, and being infinitely better than an earthly father, will provide these things for you.

"And I will trust that he who heeds
The life that hides in mead and wold,
Who hangs yon alder's crimson beads
And stains these mosses green and gold,
Will still, as he hath done, incline
His gracious care to me and mine" (Whittier).

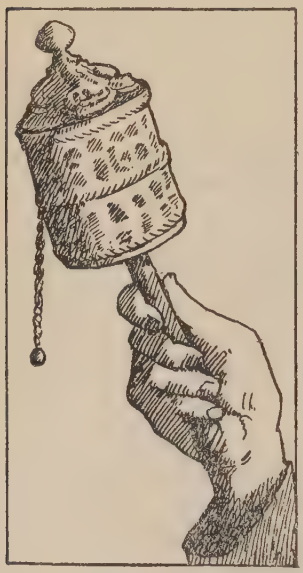
VII. MAKE FIRST THINGS FIRST, verse 33. But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. "The promise is interpreted by David's testimony (Ps. 37.25), and by Paul's experience and assurance (Phil. 4.11, 19). So interpreted, life proves it true: those who give them-

selves wholly to God's service often live in poverty, but they rarely or never suffer for want of necessary food and raiment" (Lyman Abbott).

"Who God possesseth,
In nothing is wanting,
Alone God sufficeth" (Longfellow).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

In praying use not vain repetitions, verse 7. Here is a reproduction of a prayer-wheel in my possession. It came from Tibet. The words *Omi mani pad me hum,* a mystical formula, are printed on the roll of paper within the cylinder, which can be turned by whirling the handle around. The revolving of such wheels, we are told, is heard "early and late, indoors and outdoors, a universal litany." Are Tibetans wrong in believing that the revolving of their prayer-wheels is as efficacious as the spoken utterances of vain repetitions? They have also prayer-flags, which are suspended in long lines, sometimes reaching across a river. When the breeze moves them, they are supposed to record prayers for the benefit of those who put them up.



A Prayer Wheel

Our Father, verse 9. In a reading book used in a boys' school conducted by Moslems at Damascus, a version of the Lord's Prayer begins, "Our God." To the Moslem, God is a far-off God, and to think of him as Father would dishonor him.

After this manner therefore pray ye, verse 9. Every Jew was required to recite daily eighteen set prayers of considerable length, or, if hindered by press of business, a summary of them. The rabbis also taught their pupils an additional form of prayer composed by themselves, to be added to these eighteen prayers. Our Lord's disciples would therefore understand that they were to recite the Lord's Prayer every day at the end of their ordinary prayers. That this was done there can be little doubt, for The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, which probably dates from the first century A.D., directs the Lord's Prayer to be said three times a day by all Christians.

Our Lord's followers would further regard the prayer as the badge of discipleship, something intended to distinguish the disciples of Jesus from all other men. So zealously was its secret guarded in early times, that, like the Creed, it was only taught to catechumens just before their baptism, and was never used in those portions of public worship to which the heathen were admitted. It was always used at Holy Communion, where it formed the conclusion of the canon or prayer of consecration. One Volume Commentary.

Where moth and rust consume, verse 19. When Jesus uttered these words, there was little or no conception of the usability of wealth; it was either expended for sensual pleasure or hoarded; and, if hoarded, generally in one of two ways—in rich garments and hangings which could be concealed from the tax-gatherer, or in jewels or coins which could be stored away in a pot, and, if necessary, buried in the ground. The moths currupted the one, the thieves broke through and carried off the other. Jesus condemned, not the acquisition of wealth, but its hoarding.—Lyman Abbott, in The Biblical World.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Luke tells us that once when Jesus had been praying the disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray," and in answer Jesus gave them the prayer to which we have given his name, The Lord's Prayer. Either Jesus gave this prayer on two

different occasions, or Matthew placed it earlier, inserting it in The Sermon on the Mount in order to give a comprehensive view of what Jesus taught about prayer.

See The Historical Background of our last lesson.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

In the Authorized Version verse six reads: But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet. A minister confesses that as a boy, whenever he heard this verse read, he thought at once of the old-fashioned closet, dark and narrow, half-filled with hanging garments, while in the corners were boxes and baskets spilling over with a variety of materials, saved against the evil day, and then he saw a man crowding into that closet, shutting the door, and in the closeness and darkness and stuffiness of the place trying to kneel and pray. There is a surprising number of possible misconceptions of the Bible into which pupils may have fallen, and a wise teacher is on the lookout for them.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

PUTTING FIRST THINGS FIRST

Beginning the Lesson

In the fifth chapter of Matthew we hear Jesus saying, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works." And now here at the beginning of the sixth chapter what does he practically say that one should do with his light? In telling them to give their alms and pray and fast in secret, does he not say, Hide your light from men that they may not see your good works? How shall we reconcile the two statements? What is the last clause in his directions about letting one's light shine? "And glorify your Father who is in heaven." The purpose of letting their works be seen by men was that they might lead others to glorify God who gave them the will and the power to do their good work: it was not that others might glorify the doers of the works. When the Pharisees sought to have their good works seen of men, what was their purpose? They sought solely to glorify themselves. With self-glorification Jesus had no patience: he would not have his followers do good works with this purpose in view; they must rather hide their light and do their good works in secret, seeking God's approval, not men's.

There is a public and a private side of virtue. He who is virtuous in private may give himself little concern about his good influence in public, his light cannot help shining; but he who is virtuous in public only is a hypocrite, and hypocrites Jesus despised. (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

Putting First Things First

Jesus is urging his hearers to make first things first. God's kingdom is his rule over his subjects here and now; God's righteousness is one of right relationship, love and loyalty, towards God and towards men; it is living in this world as Jesus would have us live—in a word, Christlikeness. The rich man in the parable which we call Dives and Lazarus sought secondary things first and let the first go altogether, and he stood forth a beggar in the kingdom. The rich young man who came to Jesus asking what he might do to be saved sought first things but not first things first, he could not give up secondary things for them, and he went away from Jesus sorrowful. We always think of Lincoln in this month of February. Did ever a great ruler more fully put first things first than did he? Lincoln lived up to the Sermon on the Mount. His eye was single, he served but one Master, he was not anxious for his life, for he trusted his Heavenly Father's care, he sought first his kingdom and his righteousness, and he laid up for himself treasure in heaven.

A good resolve to make: I will this day and every day endeavor to live a sincere and serene life, free from all anxiety, because trusting God's promises; I will have the world, but not let the world have me, for while I shall love the good things of this world which are God's gifts, I shall hold them as of lesser importance than the supreme things that are also his gifts, his kingdom and his righteousness.

The Philosophy of the Indwelling Mountain

An American tourist was on a train in Switzerland. He fell into conversation with a Swiss young woman who spoke fairly good English. She was on her way to Kansas.

"What part of Switzerland do you come from?" asked the American. He was thinking of the contrast between the magnificent mountain scenery of Switzerland and the level plains of Kansas.

"I live in a little place called Zermatt. Have you ever been there?"

"Indeed I have. It is one of the most beautiful places in all the world. The Matterhorn that stands guard over your village of Zermatt—never did God make a more beautiful mountain!"

"I'm glad you love my mountain," said the girl, with a smile. "I love it too. In fact, I think I love the Matterhorn better than anything else in this whole world."

"But how will you feel when you reach Kansas?" persisted the American. "Kansas is flat, you know—much of it as level as a floor. There will be no Matterhorn there."

"Oh, I don't worry," replied the woman. "I am not afraid. You see, I am going to carry my mountain with me, inside my heart."

Be not therefore anxious. The great souls of history have always been those who practiced this philosophy of the indwelling mountain. They have been made, not by their surroundings, but by their inspirations. Though they have had to live in monotony or discouragement, they have known how to keep a Matterhorn in the recesses of faith and memory.

So it must be with every soul that would master the secret of a steady and balanced life. Fill your heart with a noble vision and let that vision be your ceaseless companion and teacher. Frame for your soul a vision of a tender Father God or an heroic Elder Brother Christ, and carry that with you day in and day out. So the sky of your inner life will be eternally serene no matter what be the weather in the outer world that surrounds you. You will have less need to think about a future heaven, for the peace and blessedness of a present heaven will be already your possession.—The Youth's Companion.

The Art of Right Living

The art of right living begins here—in getting first things into the first place. Nothing is more weakening to character than to make secondary ambition primary. Life must be intelligently and solemnly consecrated to the highest and best ends.

Before a young man or woman makes what we call a start in life, there should be some earnest thought on this point. Many people have abandoned the notion of taking a lofty view of business life. "Business is business," they say, as if the remark were the last word of wisdom and there were nothing more to be said. But when this business life of ours is just beginning, we may take a nobler and more wholesome view. Let us fix it firmly in our thought that business is service. To do business is to serve our fellow-men. To do it unto God is to serve our fellow-men to the best of our powers. There is room in every business life for a character for integrity, generosity, humanity, consideration of others. Get the perspective right. See that here also first things can be kept in the first place, and there is no need to thrust ideals into the background.—C. Silvester Horne.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Hypocrisy and sincerity.

2. How to obtain release from anxiety. See Chapter X of Under the Highest Leadership, by John Douglas Adam ($1.15).

3. What is the next thing we ought to do in order to have God's will done in our city?

4. The prayer-habit. See Chapter III of Mornings in the College Chapel, by Francis Greenwood Peabody ($1.00); Chapter VI of A. B. Bruce's The Training of the Twelve ($1.00).

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Make an analysis of Chapter VII. 2. How many especially fine passages or verses are there in The Sermon on the Mount? 3. How do you explain verses 22, 23? 4. How do you interpret the Golden rule? 5. What can be put to the debit side of our prohibition law? 6. What to the credit side? 7. Has the result justified the law?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
BEING LOYAL TO GOD

Beginning the Lesson

An English writer tells this beautiful incident: A five-year-old was saying her

evening prayer; she asked God to bless her father, mother, sister, pussy, and the tame white mouse, and then she paused, perplexed, but in a moment her face beamed with joy as she added, "And please take care of yourself, God." She somehow felt that her prayer had been selfish, and her "Take care of yourself, God" was her dear way of saying that she did not want all things only for herself, while God was not remembered.

What is the topic for our department today? Let us look at the words of our text carefully and see what they have to tell us about being loyal to God.

How God Cares for Us

Flower seeds are dashed upon the ground by the wind, frozen into the solid ice, submerged by the overflowing river, Their roots contend with poor soil, and even with rocks; the growing stems elbow upward in competition with the weeds that would supplant them; the rain drenches them, the wind racks them, the sun scorches them, hail pummels them, insects attack them. But when at length the flowers burst into bloom, Christ points to them as examples of God's care.

Birds, from the time their eggs are laid until their young are fully grown, must fight the foes that threaten their treasures. Squirrels and jays destroy their eggs; snakes and hawks kill their young. In the autumn food fails and most birds have to migrate. On the way southward they are beset with peril from exhausting flights, uncertain food supplies, birds of prey, sudden storms, and murderous guns. They run a similar gauntlet when they return to us in the spring. But they come back in full song, and Christ points to them as examples of the Heavenly Father's care.

In caring for us, God uses the means that make the strongest manhood. To expect him to keep us in ease, without testing our faith, proving our courage, enlarging our sympathies, or deepening our love, and without bringing into our lives the hardships, disappointments, doubts, fears, failures, successes, joys, and triumphs that develop the strongest and noblest character, is to forget that the highest creature of God is man, and that the noblest thing in man is tested character.—The Youth's Companion.

What to Seek First

There was a poor Roman scholar once, who was very clever and gave promise of doing much good in the world. One day he saw a strange statue with curious writing carved upon it. He could read and understand the writing, and it made him watch the shadow which the statue cast on the ground, and this led him to discover his way into a hall that was stored with riches—silver and gold and precious stones. What a quantity he gathered together! What dreams he had of the great mansion he would build and the grand things he would do! Just as he turned to go, however, he saw at his feet a wonderful green stone, and he stooped to lift it, for it was worth the price of a kingdom. But the stone was fixed to the ground, and as he struggled to loosen it he saw the figure of a knight in armor that stood near slowly lift his hand and draw the arrow on the string. The arrow struck the great jewel by which the hall was lighted, and in an instant all was dark. It was in vain the scholar groped and groped to find the door by which he had entered; he could not find it, and so perished miserably in the dark by the side of all the treasures he had gathered together.

That is an interesting story, is it not! But what does it mean? Just this: the riches are dear, however abundant they may be, that are obtained at the cost of all that makes the light of life for us. They never should be the first.

And so there are many other things that people put first, only to find—perhaps when too late—that they should have been second, or third, or even farther down.

Jesus leaves us in no mistake. He speaks the right word we all need when he says, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness." That means make it your first concern about everything to be right with God.

That fits everybody. There are some things we may never hope to be able to do: they may be too great, or too wise, or too difficult for us, or they may take too long a time, or more strength than we shall ever have. But—to be right with God!—we can all seek this, and seek successfully, too. How? By trying to live up to Jesus. He is like the top line of the copy book and as we imitate that, we come by and by to write like it. He is the Friend and as we keep close by him, we come to speak as he speaks, and to do as he does, and be as he is. What is more, he is the Helper, and when we have done wrong he can put us right. To believe in him, to

love him and strive to be like him, that is the first thing every one of us should do.—J. Reid Howatt, quoted in The Expositor's Treasury of Children's Sermons.

God's Purpose for Us

I was teaching in a town in my native state. Through the town ran a great railroad system. On that system the engineer of a passenger train was a dear personal friend of my own. I dropped him a line, and told him I would be on hand the next morning to greet him as he passed through. Early in the morning I was sitting by the side of the track, at the end of a long bridge, waiting for my friend. Soon I heard the whistle of his engine. Presently his fast train was thundering upon the bridge. Quickly I looked up and waved my morning salute. In answer there flashed out from the cab window a grimy, gloved hand.

I caught a glimpse of my friend's face as his engine rushed by. But it was only a face in profile. It never turned aside to me. It was set like a flint in its gaze upon the track. At once I saw that deep down in his heart was the purpose of every true passenger railroad-engineer, and that was to bring every man, woman, and child in that train in safety to the great city to which his train was speeding. I was proud of my engineer friend that day; proud because not even the presence of a dear friend could turn him aside from the deep purpose of his life.

God has one supreme purpose for the life of every Christian. Jesus Christ puts it in one terse sentence: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God." He does not argue. He does not mince words. He does not debate with you as to whether you think this possible. He speaks with authority. He simply puts it: Seek ye first the Kingdom.

God wants men and women like my railroad-engineer friend—men and women whom nothing in the world will be able to turn aside from making the Kingdom the deep, burning purpose of life.

"Ah," you say, "that is all very well for ministers and missionaries and Christian workers, but is not for me." May I call your attention to a great truth that we must discriminate between the necessities of life and the purpose of life?

Here is a great ocean liner. She must needs have her bunkers filled with coal, her tanks with water, her commissary with provisions, in order to make her voyage across the deep. These are the necessities of her voyage. But are they the purpose of it? Far from it. Down deep in the heart of the quiet-faced helmsman, the sharp-eyed lookout, and the bronzed captain on the bridge, is one deep, changeless, absorbing purpose, and that is to bring the great ship with her freight of precious souls into the far-distant harbor toward which her sharp steel prow is pointed.

Even so with the child of God. For example, he must eat and drink to live. That is necessity. But God forbid that he should make eating and drinking the purpose of his life.

So God knows all about the necessities of your life. He expects you to have other interests and duties. But back of all these necessities can be a great, unshaken purpose, possessing and absorbing the heart, like the purpose of the captain of the great ship.—James H. McConkey, in The Christian.

Sentence Sermons

O thou, by whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way,
The path of prayer thyself hast trod:
Lord, teach us how to pray!—James Montgomery.

Every man cannot be *the* best, but every man can be *his* best.—Mirabeau.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Commit to memory Chapter VII. 2. Why did Jesus ask his question in verse 16? 3. How may you know whether or not you are a Christian? 4. Read what James says in his Epistle about doers and hearers of the word. (Jas. 1.22-25; 2.14-20.) 5. How does public safety depend upon temperance? 6. What advantages have come to business because of our prohibition law? 7. What has the Golden Rule to do with temperance?

WARNING AND PROMISES (TEMPERANCE LESSON)

GOLDEN TEXT: Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Matthew 7.19

LESSON Matthew 7.1-29 DEVOTIONAL READING Proverbs 2.1-8

MATTHEW 7.12 All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets.

15 Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. 16 By their fruits ye shall know them. Do *men* gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20 Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them. 21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

24 Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock: 25 and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock. 26 And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: 27 and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. JUDGING OTHERS, verses 1-5.

II. USING DISCRIMINATION, verse 6.

III. THE FATHERLY LOVE OF GOD, verses 7-11.

IV. THE GOLDEN RULE, verse 12. All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them. The context shows the meaning of the *therefore*: since God is so good to us, we must be good to others. "With these words Jesus closes up the teaching of these chapters," said Martin Luther, "and ties them all up in a little bundle." For this is the law and the prophets—the two collections into which the Jewish writings were divided. "Perhaps to a certain extent this was a current phrase, equaled all that was necessary; but, no doubt, seriously meant; therefore it may help us to understand the statement in verse 17, 'I came not to destroy, but to fulfil.' The Golden Rule was Law and Prophets only in an ideal sense, and in the same sense only was Christ a Fulfiller" (Expositor's Greek Testament). For the right application of the Golden Rule, see "Apply the Golden Rule to Life," First Topic.

He who thinks that drinking alcoholic liquor does himself no harm and, without caring whether or not it harms his neighbor, demands the right to its free use in our land, is not obeying the Golden Rule.

V. DISTINGUISHING FALSE FROM TRUE LEADERS, verses 15-23. Beware of false phophets, warned the Master. They come to you in sheep's clothing, disguised as honest teachers, but inwardly they are ravening wolves, rapacious workers of evil. The lamb or sheep was the symbol of innocence or harmlessness; the wolf, of all sorts of evil. "It was a time of religious excitement; the force of custom broken, the deep fountains of the soul bursting forth; witness the crowds who followed John and Jesus, and the significant saying about the Kingdom of Heaven suffering violence (Mt. 11.12). Such times call forth true prophets and also spurious ones, in religious sympathy with prevalent enthusiasms, but bent on utilizing them for their own advantages in gain or influence, men of the Judas type" (A. B. Bruce).

"I do not think there are many preachers of this type today. But there are books and dramas in plenty."

How shall the impostors be recognized? By their fruits, said Jesus. Character is revealed by conduct.

A Chinese convert to Christianity, a middle-aged farmer, was asked by a missionary what evidence he had that he was a Christian. After some thought the man replied: "I believe I have a little proof. When I used to clear the stones off my fields, because it was more convenient I just tossed them over into my neighbor's fields, but I don't do that now. I carry them and throw them into a gully or some other place where they will not harm anybody."

Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Jesus does not say, as Dr. G. H. Knight reminds us, "Do men expect to gather grapes from thorns?" for he knew well that, strange as it seems, that is exactly what thousands do expect. His question is, "Do they ever succeed in finding them?" Even so, just as we gather fruit only from a tree which bears it, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

"By no alchemy can we get golden conduct out of leaden motives" (Spencer).

A tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down for fuel. It is not enough not to bring forth evil fruit; one must bring forth good fruit.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. The repetition, Lord, Lord, indicates that such a follower of Jesus was ostentatious rather than genuine, but the emphatic word is *saith,* for the contrast is between saying, claiming, Jesus as Lord, and doing, obeying him.

"And I remember still
The words, and from whence they came,
Not he that repeateth the name,
But he that doeth the will!" (Longfellow).

Many will say to me in that day, the day of judgment, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works?" The New Testament use of the word *prophesy* is that of speaking under divine inspiration, whether in regard to things past, present or future. "Can a doer of good works be worthy? A man's real character will show in his life; but single acts, or even a considerable number of acts, do not necessarily indicate his real character. There would seem to be the two sides of truth which Jesus was teaching in these verses. A bad man cannot conceal his true character, even from his fellow men, in the long run. But a bad man can do good deeds, and he may even presumably do them in the name of Jesus Christ."

"Balaam was, for a season, truly inspired as a prophet, though he was very wicked and died in his iniquity. Judas, doubtless, wrought miracles as well as his associates, when they were sent out to preach and heal. If men could speak by inspiration and work miracles without being truly pious, how great the danger that one may be a successful preacher and yet not a Christian!" (John A. Broadus).

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you as my disciples: depart from me, ye that work iniquity, that do evil. This a clear claim that he will be the Judge.

VI. THE TWO FOUNDATIONS, verses 24-27. Everyone therefore that heareth these words of mine and doeth them, shall be likened in a parable unto the wise and foolish builders, one of whom built upon rock and one upon the sand. The wise builder knew that the storms would come and test his work, and he dug deep down into the earth until he came to the solid rock, and on that he built his house. The foolish builder thought not of coming storms, but built only for sunny days, directly upon the shifting sand, just as a child builds his sand house on the seashore without thinking of the incoming tide. To the rock-founded house that endures Jesus likens the character built upon him, upon faith in him which results in obedience to him: to the sand-founded house that collapses, the character that listens to him but obeys not his words.

In the Arctic Ocean icebergs are seen forcing their way steadily onward even in the face of a strong gale. Seemingly afloat on the surface, they

really extend far below the surface, and it is the deep undercurrent in the ocean that bears them onward. The character that rests on the precepts of Christ is directed in its onward course by a power that overcomes all adverse winds and tides.

VII. THE EFFECT OF JESUS' TEACHING, verses 28, 29. The scribes spoke *by* authority, in accordance with what had been said by others before them: Jesus spoke *with* authority, out of his own divine consciousness. Jesus never at any time sought to establish his authority by argument, he simply assumed it. And the effect upon his disciples of his life as well as of his words was to vindicate his assumption.

When Jesus had finished these words, Matthew tells us, the multitudes were astonished at his teaching.

And as we draw our study of The Sermon on the Mount to a close, the effect upon us is the same. We are astonished at the uniqueness, the weightiness, the universality, the sublimity, the power, of Jesus' words. Familiarity with them can never make them commonplace. Rather does repeated study show us greater depths in their meaning, and fill us with but greater awe.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? verse 16. The idea is not absurd. There were thorns with grape-like fruit, and thistles with heads like figs.—Expositor's Greek Testament.

Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire, verse 19. It is worthy of note that in Western Asia no tree is planted or even allowed to grow, unless its fruit commends it to the care of man. Fuel being scarce, all other trees are cut down; the poplar alone may be excepted, whose tall trunk is needed for house-building.—Van Lennep.

A wise man who built his house upon the rock, verse 24. In the hill country the houses are all built of heavy masonry. As no wood is ever used in the building of walls, roofs, or floors, it becomes necessary to have thick walls, set on solid foundations of rock, and the walls are often from two to five feet in thickness, the ceiling or roof being vaulted. Very often it is necessary to dig from twenty to fifty feet in the ground until the bed of rock is reached, especially when upper stories are built. In towns or villages of the plains where rocks and stones are scarce, the houses are built of bricks made of sun-dried clay or mud, and often in these regions, where the periodical rains are very heavy and long continued, the mud houses collapse from the rain.—Gamahliel Wad-el-Ward, in Palestine Through the Eyes of a Native.

And the rain descended and the floods came, verse 27. In all Western Asia, the rains, though comparatively infrequent, are copious and heavy while they last. The uneven and often abrupt surface of the country, presenting steep mountain heights and deep valleys, occasions, during a storm, the rapid gathering of waters to a single point, so that mighty torrents suddenly appear rushing along through gorges where not a drop of water trickled a moment before. These pour down with terrible force, often tearing away rocks and trees, and sweeping all before them. Houses erected near their track are in imminent danger of being carried away by the angry floods. Should there be any weakness in their foundation, the rushing waters soon work their way beneath, and, undermining the building, bear it away bodily.—Van Lennep.

The Arabs say that wadies in time of flood are "not rivers, but seas." When people in these regions speak of the strength of a house, it is not by affirming that "It will last so many years," but that "It will withstand the rains: it will not be injured by the floods." Only the house founded upon a rock can withstand the rains and floods of a wet season.—Roberts, Oriental Illustrations.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Recall The Historical Background of Lesson IV. The Sermon on the Mount begins with *Blessed* and ends with *Beware.* You have heard the conditions of membership in the kingdom of heaven, the characteristics of its members, now obey

its principles, Jesus says in effect in the closing words which we study today. Be ye doers of the word, not hearers only.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

In connection with Jesus' words about saying and doing, ponder these words of Henry James, the well-known psychologist:

No matter how full a reservoir of maxims one may possess, and no matter how good one's sentiments may be, if one has not taken advantage of every concrete opportunity to *act*, one's character may remain entirely unaffected for the better. With mere good intentions, hell is proverbially paved. Every time a resolution or a fine glow of feeling evaporates without bearing practical fruit, it is worse than a chance lost; it works so as positively to hinder future resolutions and emotions from taking the normal path of discharge.

A most important part of a teacher's work is the directing of his pupils' thought toward concrete opportunities of putting these lessons into practice.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

CUTTING DOWN THE CORRUPT TREE

Beginning the Lesson

"The holy law of Jesus Christ governs our civilization, but it has not yet permeated it," cried Victor Hugo in Les Miserables. How true are his words today! If we obeyed the Golden Rule today, would there be any temperance tangle in our land? Just what does that rule mean? Should we do unto others in their position what we in our position would like to have done to us? Should we do unto others in their position what we in their position would like to have done to us, or what would be the best for us in their position, whether we would like it or not? What bearing has this upon the Eighteenth Amendment?

Applying the Golden Rule to Life

We must use every part of wisdom and strategy at our command, if we are to interpret the meaning of the Golden Rule and apply it to life. Taken literally, and without qualification, it would mean that we must do whatever others want, and give them whatever we might wish under like conditions. So interpreted, it would mean that we must give the child his folly, the toper his liquor, and even to the burglar his booty. Even when we do not wish to evade obligation, we must, so far as possible, avoid absurdity. Altruism, as Tolstoy has shown in an entry in his diary, if taken by itself, and followed to its logical issue, ends in anarchy—against which an elemental sanity protests. Obviously Jesus means that we must do unto others—not necessarily what they want us to do—but what we ourselves would like them to do unto us if we, *with our desires as disciples of Christ,* were in their position. And just as we like to be treated, not exactly according to what we are, but according to what we are hoping and trying to be, so we should treat others.—Joseph Fort Newton.

"Ring-Barking" an Evil Tree

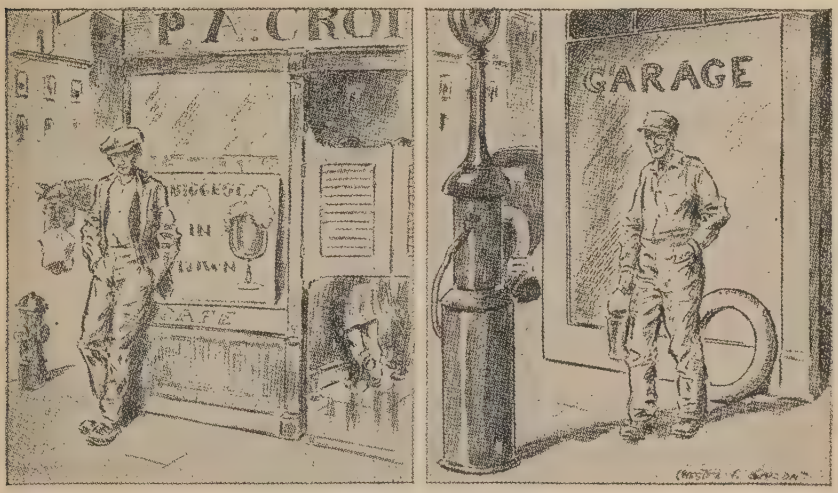
A British preacher, the Rev. J. Ernest James, formerly lived in Australia, and in a recent address he gave a telling illustration from the manner of clearing the land of trees which is sometimes practiced in that country. A man will chop through the bark of each tree, making a ring around it. This is called "ring-barking." It prevents the sap from rising and the tree dies. It was rather a weird sight, he said, to see what was once a forest standing with no leaves, the trees all withered and stark. When a forest fire came it would sweep right through the trees.

Something like this, the speaker said, was happening with the liquor traffic. The liquor trade was a great tree bearing much evil fruit and deadly shame. It had been tried and tested through the whole history of man, but now it was ring-barked, and soon the fire of public opinion would come sweeping along and the trade would disappear. In his opinion the day would come in England when the ballot-box would vanquish the hotel-bar, and it would be by the consent and will of the people.

Mr. James gave some interesting facts in his address. Doctors, scientists, psychologists, all agreed that too much drinking was harmful. Two years before prohibition was established in America, the American Medical Association agreed that alcoholic drinks should not be recommended by them, either as beverages or drugs.

It was the business men who carried through the prohibition issue in America. They saw the waste of time and labor and money for which alcoholic drink was responsible. Even hotel keepers recognized the evil, for one of the hotels in Australia advertised, "Wanted, a barman—must be total abstainer."

God made alcohol for a good purpose, which is industry, as a fuel to drive our engines, in chloroform and ether, etc. The German people are already using alcohol



A City Corner before and after Prohibition
From The Saturday Evening Post

to drive tractors. Coal might some day run out, oil wells might some day run dry, but as long as the sun shone and the plants grew green there could be alcohol for fuel, and he believed it was to be the future motor power for traffic.

Alcoholic Drinking is not the Source of Every Evil under the Sun

A recent book upon anatomy and physiology speaks of "the harmlessness of a moderate use of alcoholic beverages upon the tissues of the human body, and of the entirely neutral influence of their consumption upon the span of human life." Most expert authorities on the subject assent to this conclusion. It is *moderate* drinking about which this statement can be made, not heavy and excessive drinking. The book further states, however, that even moderate drinking "totally unfits a man or woman for good work in whatever field that work is undertaken," and points out that alcohol "has an undesirable effect on certain otherwise lovable and industrious characters." Let us grant, then, that the bodily tissues are not harmed nor the span of life shortened by the *moderate* use of alcoholic beverages. But what is moderate drinking for some is immoderate drinking for others, as the findings of life insurance companies show. They report that the death rate among steady drinkers supposed to be temperate—"even within the bounds of so-called moderation"—is nearly double that of abstemious people.

A Connecticut Judge's Opinion of Law Breakers

Two bootleggers pleaded guilty before a Connecticut judge and gave a list of their customers. Twenty violators of the law, prominent citizens of Hartford, were hauled into court and Judge Maltbie addressed them as follows:

"Every one of you, when you became an elector, held up your hand and swore that you would uphold the Constitution of the United States. These men here are charged and have pled guilty to breaking the laws of your country, not in any accidental way or in an outburst of passion, but coldly and consciously, in order to get a portion of the results of an illegal traffic, and they have done it to get your money. Not only have they broken the law of their country, but the trade which they represent, as every man of you knows, drags after it every manner of violence

up to murder, smuggling, piracy, and, worst of all, bribery and corruption. The trail of its crimes leads right to the door of you who have come here and told that you have played your part in it. You are supposed to represent property, respectability, and social position. What are you, after all, but participators in crime and instigators of crime? That's what you are. If you can choose what laws you will obey, any other man can choose what laws he will obey; and if you do this, what becomes of your country? You are digging into the very vitals of your country. There's many a man who sits in that pen over there who is deserving more at the hand of the courts and the public than you are."

As the Christian Century Sees the Situation

Deaths from alcoholism are greatly on the increase, if recently announced figures are to be trusted. To stop this decimation, and especially to check the hereditary transmission of alcoholic tendencies to the society of the future, our present rigorous legislation was enacted. Apparently the effort is unsuccessful in the first particular. The decimation goes on.

The question remains how successful the effort is to be in the second particular. The promptness with which the new alcoholism claims its victims would seem to offer ghastly encouragement to lawbreakers; these victims are often being carried off so quickly that their alcohol-soaked systems do not have time to transmit their weaknesses to oncoming generations. An increasing proportion will perhaps leave no progeny whatever.

The invasion of the schools by malignantly unprincipled bootleggers, in many cases under the encouragement of open lawlessness in the homes from which the pupils come, indicates that alcoholic avarice is disposed to seize its victims young, where it can. The kind of liquor now being used will make short work of them. Now that both boys and girls with congenital weaknesses, are being swept into the bootleggers' caldron, the brew bids fair to come to a speedy precipitation. Good sense, and plain reason may yet come to the rescue, before the terrible havoc now promised shall have transpired. But whole generations sometimes attend that dear school against which wise old Ben Franklin warned the heedless. If we will not learn in any other, inexorable experience takes us in hand. The prohibition issue bids fair to make us or break us.

Another Corrupt Tree

It is said that there are one million five hundred thousand known narcotic addicts in our country, and authorities place the number of other addicts who are not known at the same figure, making at least three million users of narcotics, who consume more of these dreadful drugs than all the people of Europe. "These drugs—morphine, cocaine, heroin—impair and then destroy not only the physical powers but, what is worse, the finer mental and moral faculties. Narcotic addicts soon develop anti-social tendencies. Lying, stealing and murder are practised with facility when occasion seems to require." Literature giving facts about this terrible evil can be obtained from the International Narcotic Education Association, 512 Chamber of Commerce Building, Los Angeles.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Is success in Christian work a proof of a Christian life, or apparent failure a proof of the opposite?

2. Facts about our prohibition law. See Prohibition in Outline. (The Methodist Book Concern, N. Y. $.75, by mail $.82.)

3. Scientific temperance education. See pamphlet entitled Alcohol and Life, by Ernest Thomas, published by the United Church of Canada, Wesley Buildings, Toronto, fifteen cents.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Who were the publicans, and why did the Jews despise them? 2. What is the force of Jesus' argument in verses 12 and 13? 3. How did Jesus regard his work of healing? 4. What has been the effect upon the world of Jesus' sympathetic attitude toward the afflicted? 5. What did Jesus say in John 14.12? 6. Should the preacher minister to diseased souls through private conferences, "confessionals," as Dr. Fosdick calls them, "for lack of a better word," he says. 7. How is our class helping to meet human needs? 8. What definite needs exist in our community? 9. What can we do about it?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE TRUTH ABOUT ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Beginning the Lesson

Of what is a sheep or a lamb a symbol? Of what is a wolf a symbol? When Jesus warned his disciples against false teachers, how did he describe them? Although they looked as innocent as sheep, there was one test which always found them out: what was it? "By their fruits ye shall know them": what does this mean? Jesus explained it by what question?

Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? What an absurd question that seems! "Of course men do not gather grapes of thorns nor figs of thistles!" exclaims Dr. J. D. Jones in one of his books. "All people for the most part get from thorns are scratches; and as for thistles, they seem to serve no purpose except to worry the heart of the poor farmer in whose fields they spring up! And yet Jesus Christ seems to hint that there were people expecting this absurd and impossible thing, expecting to gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles. That is to say, there were people who thought they could be one thing and do the other. And, indeed, for the matter of that, I think there are such people alive still.

"A man once came to Opie, the great painter. He was a painter of a sort himself, but lazy and shiftless. And yet he envied Opie his success; he thought it was all some sort of little trick of mixing colors, and if he only knew the trick he could paint as well as Opie himself. So he came to Opie one day and said to him, 'With what do you mix your paints, Mr. Opie?' and the painter, knowing the lazy man with whom he had to do, answered in a voice of thunder, 'With brains, sir.' That poor fellow was looking for figs from thistles, the fruit of success to grow on the tree of idleness. Opie told him that the fruit of success was only to be plucked from the tree of honest work.

"So I might go on illustrating. You never gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles, and you never gather love from the tree of selfishness, nor success from the tree of laziness, nor brave deeds from the tree of cowardice. It is only unselfishness that wins affection, it is only toil that achieves success, it is only the courageous heart that does brave deeds."

Known by your Fruits

I once went to live in a new house with a garden, and in the garden I found some gooseberry bushes growing. To all appearances they were much alike. They had the same situation, the same soil and sunshine, and the same care. But when the fruit season came one bush had large, finely flavored fruit, while the berries on the other, close beside it, were hard and tart and green. They were two different varieties. Until the fruit came on, I could not tell which was which. I could tell them only by the fruit.

People are very much like trees in an orchard. They are planted there by a gardener who sets them in the place and soil he thinks best for them. There are good people and bad, and they are not unlike to look at. How shall we know them? Our Lord told his disciples how. He said, "You will know them by their fruits." If a man finds apples growing in an orchard, he says "This is an apple tree." For apples grow on no other kind. If he finds plums, he knows he has a plum tree. So if you know some one who does good, you say he is a good man; but if you know some one who does wicked things, you say he is a bad man, for good people do not do such things. You know people, like trees, by their fruits, that is, by the deeds they do, because these show their character.

But if we apply this test to other people, we must apply it to ourselves as well. Perhaps you think you are kind and loving at heart, and your grapes quite sweet. You may be a little cross sometimes, when you are put out, but it is nothing to speak of, a few prickles don't matter. Yet vines do not have thorns. Other people will judge you by your fruits. They may be saying, "I cannot ask anything of that boy or girl, he is so disobliging," or, "She is so selfish." While you think you are vines, they may be finding you thorns, to which they need not go if they want grapes. It is a good thing to test yourselves by this. How do you look to others? Do they gather good fruit from you? You will be known both to them and to yourselves by your fruits, for by them you prove what your character is, and whether you are a good fruit tree or a barren thorn.

God knows you by your fruits. He is the Gardener who has planted the orchard

of this world, and he has planted his trees that he may have fruit. That is what he wishes to have, and if he does not find it, he knows he has a poor tree. What kind of fruit does he want? St. Paul has told us nine "fruits of the Spirit." They are Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, and Temperance. Very likely you do not see much fruit yet, when you look into your hearts. Such fruits as these take a long time to grow. They must grow slowly all your life in the sunshine of happiness, and the rain of trouble, and the frost of unkindness; and the Gardener is watching the fruit grow slowly but surely till it is ripe. He sees first the flower-bud, and then the blossom, and then the fruit. He does not expect ripe fruit before its season, but he sees it growing, and he knows his tree is not barren. The best we can do is poor enough, but in it God sees the promise of what we shall be hereafter, if only we are really and honestly doing our best.

Within the folded seed
God sees the flower, and in the will the deed.
—Herbert S. Seekings, in The Expository Times.

A Sharp Ax for a Corrupt Tree

The corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. What is a corrupt thing? Something that is rotten, poisonous, utterly bad. Most things have at least a little good in them, but Jesus says there are some things which have not. How may we know whether an evil thing is a good thing gone wrong, or a thing that is bad from root to twig? By its fruit, the evil which it does. Take a bad habit like the drink, as we call it. The doctors, the police courts, the hospitals, say it does nothing but harm. Then that is a corrupt tree. Take envy, jealousy, bad temper: what good do they do? Again, none. They bring forth wrong and misery, and often lead to crime. Then they are corrupt things. They cannot bring forth good fruit.

What are we to do with corrupt things? Let them alone, try to improve them, build fences about them so that they cannot do much evil? All these things have been tried and are still being tried. But Jesus gives a different method. He says, Get rid of them, exterminate them, hew them down and fling them into the fire,—that is all they are fit for, to make a bonfire. The gentle Christ can be very stern when dealing with the thing that is utterly bad.

With what is this to be done? Jesus says the corrupt tree is to be hewn down, and this suggests the ax. A shining steel ax is not much use against the drink habit. Carrie Nation tried that long ago. She went about with a hatchet and attempted to destroy saloons, but she only succeeded in getting into trouble herself. Another ax, the legislative ax, has been used with success in our country. Our Congress passed a law that no intoxicating liquor could be manufactured or sold in the United States if the States agreed, and then our State Senators and Representatives approved, and this good ax has closed the saloons in our land.

The Harm of Liquor Drinking

A French sculptor named Jacobin exhibited at one of the Paris saloons a group which he called "The Evening of Pay Day." Two replicas of the group have been sent to the United States. It represents a drunken workingman lying on his face in the gutter with bottles strewn around, while standing by him are a woman with a babe in her arms and a little child holding on to her hand. Intermediate and Senior pupils have never seen such a living group in our country, and they have little realization of the products of the saloon before our Prohibition Law went into effect.

A police magistrate of London, England, says that the drink evil in East London makes "a sight of acute suffering for childhood. Wives and children are driven terror-stricken into the blackness of a November night, and the ears of children are outraged by foul epithets and filthy metaphors, and brutal assaults sometimes occur. The servitude of drink is a ghostly slavery. It produces a dissolution of every virtue that makes manhood and womanhood, and the despair of the victims is a revelation of its terror."

Another British writer, in speaking of the sights of the cathedral city of Chichester, mentions the "groups of the most utterly drink-degraded wretches it is possible to find anywhere in the kingdom—men with soulless, bloated faces are strangely incongruous in that spot under the great spire, in sight of the green, open, healthy downs."

It was Dr. Johnson, the great dictionary-maker, who said to a lady who offered him a glass of wine, "Madam, total abstinence is easy for me, but temperance is

impossible." It is not always the quantity of spiritous liquors that is responsible for drunkenness: it is their effect. There are men who can drink a large amount and never get drunk, although they are harmed in other ways. There are others whom a small amount renders unfit. It is to save men and women from being harmed by liquor that our Prohibition Law was passed. It was done in the spirit of the Golden Rule.

Who Benefits by Prohibition?

The Bulletin, a newspaper of Walla Walla, Washington, gives a summary in a few brief statements in answer to this question:

Wage earners, whose wages increased twenty per cent while living costs were reduced eighteen per cent since 1920.

Employers, who benefit by increased production and reduced labor turnover; by sober workmen, fewer accidents; and no more "blue Mondays."

Farmers, who buy three times as much farm machinery and who sell forty-five per cent more milk than in 1920, and who rarely have a drunken farm hand.

Bankers, in whose banks deposits have increased sixty per cent.

Insurance men, who have had a one hundred and thirty per cent increase of insurance.

Real estate men, who sold an average of seven hundred and forty-one new homes every day last year, and who find rents and payments easier to collect.

Manufacturers, whose manufactured products reach more than the peak of post-war products.

Merchants, who get much of the two billion dollars formerly spent in drink, and who have thousands of buyers where they used to have hundreds.

Everybody's wife, who shares in all this increased prosperity and rejoices in all it means to her family.

Private and Public Safety Depends largely upon Temperance

In this age of high-powered and automatic machinery every person's life is in constant danger. A slight misstep, a little uncertainty in crossing a street or observing a signal, a bit of carelessness in operating a machine or recklessness in driving an automobile or locomotive, means injury or death. Twenty-five thousand people were killed in this country last year by automobiles alone, as compared with thirty-six thousand who were killed in action in our army during the World War. The toll taken by accidents each year constitutes a very large proportion of the total number of deaths from all causes. For any of us to fail in taking all possible necessary precautions for the safety of ourselves and others is literally criminal. It is a well-known fact that the effect of alcohol, even when taken in small quantities, is to impair the control which nerve centers exercise over muscular movements. No one can foretell how serious this impairment will be in any given instance, or foresee the consequences which may result.—Benjamin S. Winchester, in The International Journal of Religious Education.

Sentence Sermons

Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.—Proverbs 20.11.

It is well to think well: it is divine to act well.—Horace Mann.

Figs, as you see and know,
Do not out of thistles grow;
And, though the blossoms blow
White on the tree,
Grapes never, never yet
On limbs of thorns were set;
So, if you a good would get,
Good you must be.—Alice Cary.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Read the account of the healing of the paralytic in Luke 5.18-26. 2. How did the friends get the paralytic before Jesus? 3. What sort of bed was it that the man took up? 4. What is blasphemy? 5. Why did they accuse Jesus of blasphemy? 6. What did his answer mean? 7. What is our church school doing to help the needy? 8. What is our class doing? 9. What more can and should we do?

JESUS HEALING AND HELPING

GOLDEN TEXT: Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases. Matthew 8.17

LESSON Matthew 8.1 to 9.34 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 35.3-10

MATTHEW 9.1 And he entered into a boat, and crossed over, and came into his own city. 2 And behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven. 3 And behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. 4 And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? 5 For which is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and walk? 6 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the sick of the palsy), Arise, and take up thy bed, and go unto thy house. 7 And he arose, and departed to his house. 8 But when the multitudes saw it, they were afraid, and glorified God, who had given such authority unto men.

9 And as Jesus passed by from thence, he saw a man, called Matthew, sitting at the place of toll: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.

10 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Jesus and his disciples. 11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Teacher with the publicans and sinners? 12 But when he heard it, he said, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. 13 But go ye and learn what *this* meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice: for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. A LEPER CURED, 8.1-4.

II. A CENTURION'S SERVANT CURED, 8.5-13.

III. PETER'S WIFE'S MOTHER CURED, 8.14-17.

IV. DISCIPLESHIP EXACTING, 8.18-22.

V. A TEMPEST STILLED, 8.23-27.

VI. A GADARENE DEMONIAC RESTORED TO REASON, 8.28-34.

VII. A PARALYTIC CURED, 9.1-8. From the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, where he had cured the demoniac, Jesus, with his disciples, sailed across to Capernaum, "his own city." Then came four men bearing a palsied man on his bed, which was possibly a mattress, or merely a blanket. As Luke gives the account, they found the way to Jesus blocked, but they mounted the outer stairway to the roof, and tore a hole in the roof large enough to allow them to let their burden down before the Master.

"Trust in nothing but in Providence and your own efforts: never separate the two" (Dickens).

Had they not believed that Jesus could cure their friend, they would not have taken all this trouble to get him into Jesus' presence. Jesus saw their faith and said to the sick man, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven."

We sometimes say to another, "Cheer up!" and our words mean little or nothing, a casual observation which we forget as soon as spoken, a mere vague expression of good-will, a timely counsel, perhaps, but one for which we have little warrant. When Jesus says, Be of good cheer, he speaks with absolute authority and in his voice there is the sound of victory.

"This man blasphemeth," said some of the scribes to themselves. They accused Jesus of treating God impiously (blaspheming) by claiming power to exercise the divine prerogative of forgiving sin. Jesus read their thoughts and said to them, "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say Thy sins are forgiven; or to say Arise and walk?" Both were equally easy *to say,* but the result of the latter saying was easier for Jesus to prove. That he had the power to forgive sin he could not prove on the spot, but that he had the power to cure disease he could at once demonstrate. "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins," continued Jesus as he turned

to the sick man and said to him, "Arise and take up thy bed, and go into thy house." Thus he made, as Zigabenus long ago said, the visible power a testimony to the invisible. And the man arose, and departed to his house.

"To the mind of both paralytic and critics, sin and physical ailment were cause and effect. The power to remove the disease was by the critics regarded as God-given (John 3.2); but the power to forgive the sin, a divine prerogative alone. In reality the argument of Christ was this: that, as the accepted connection between sin and disease was that of cause and effect, and probably was so in the case of the paralytic, he who could heal a sin-caused disease, could heal the sin itself" (Carl D. Case).

"A healthy body is good; but a soul in right health—is the thing beyond all else to be prayed for; blessedest thing the earth receives from heaven" (Carlyle).

To see the palsied man walking was an amazing sight, and the multitudes were afraid, and they glorified God for giving such authority unto men.

VIII. THE CALL OF MATTHEW, 9.9. As Jesus passed by after his healing the paralytic, he saw Matthew sitting at the place of toll. Matthew the publican, he is called in our text for next week, a collector of taxes in Roman employ, and therefore a much despised man. See Light from Oriental Life. "Follow me," said Jesus, as he had said to Peter and Andrew, James and John, and at once Matthew left the place of toll and followed him. There are several Greek words in the New Testament which are alike translated *saw.* The one in this verse means Jesus looked at Matthew closely, contemplatively, and then after that long look he said, "Follow me." The Pharisees glanced at Matthew, and said to themselves, "A publican and a sinner," and drew their robes a little closer as they passed by.

"Men saw a hated publican, of those
Base underlings who served the Roman State
And sold their Hebrew heritage for gold.
Men cursed and spat at passing him; but One
That God who looketh on the heart, came by,
Gazed in his face, and saw the faithful eyes
Whose warm response might cheer his grievous way
For three long years of struggle; saw the hand
That wrote the noblest Gospel. And he spoke,
And said to Matthew, 'Follow me.'"

**"To the dead he sayeth, Arise!
To the living, Follow Me!
And that voice still soundeth on
From the centuries that are gone,
To the centuries that shall be"** (Longfellow).

IX. THE GREAT PHYSICIAN FOR DISEASED SOULS, 9.10-13. How could Matthew better honor his new-found Master than by letting his friends know him, too? He invited Jesus and others to a feast in his house. There Jesus reclined at table with many publicans and sinners as well as with his disciples (Lk. 5.29). The word "sinners" did not necessarily mean evil men. Often it meant men who failed to perform the stated rites required by the religious leaders. The Pharisees regarded with greater abhorrence a man who had transgressed the traditions of the elders than a man of immoral life. There were uninvited Pharisees present, for it was customary for uninvited people to attend feasts as onlookers and even to engage in conversation with the guests. These Pharisees looked on contemptuously and at once found fault with Jesus. "Why eateth your Teacher with the publicans and sinners?" they asked his disciples, and Jesus answered for them, saying, "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." *Whole, hale, health,* all come from the Anglo-Saxon word *hal,* and *whole* here means to be *in health.* The force of this argument is, of course, that as the physician labors among the sick, so the Physician of Souls must labor among sinners. "But go ye, and learn what this meaneth, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,'" continued Jesus, quoting Hosea 6.6. The Pharisees were careful not to eat with publicans and sinners lest they break one of their ceremonial laws, but they would not show them a kindness: they cared for sacrifice, the externals of their religion, and not for mercy, the

religious spirit. "For I came not to call the righteous," said Jesus—and the Pharisees deemed themselves righteous—"but sinners."

Said John Newton when near the end of his life: "My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things—that I am a great sinner, and that Christ is a great Savior."

X. WHY THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS FASTED NOT, 9.14-17.
XI. CURE OF THE RULER'S DAUGHTER AND OF A WOMAN, 9.8-26.
XII. TWO BLIND MEN RECEIVE SIGHT, 9.27-30.
XIII. A DUMB MAN'S SPEECH RESTORED, 9.31-34.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Thy sins are forgiven, verse 2. The Jews associated sickness with sin, holding that the former was caused by the latter. When Jesus met a man who had been blind from his birth, his disciples said to him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?" The Jews believed that when a man recovered from an illness it indicated that the divine displeasure had been removed. "There is no sick man healed of his sickness," said the rabbis, "until all his sins have been forgiven him."

Sitting at the place of toll, verse 9. A large portion of the income of Herod Antipas must have come from customs. The privilege of collecting these customs was sold to contractors, who in turn sold to others the right to collect them in specific places. As the men who actually did the collecting kept all in excess of what they paid for the contract, they were certain to be extortionate. This fact, as well as that they represented an obnoxious government, made the publicans despised and hated.—Burton and Matthews.

Head of Matthew

A friend in Turkey sends this account of the way taxes are collected there today:

The farmer, having gathered and threshed his wheat, cannot touch a kernel of it for his own use until the tax collector has come and taken a third of his crop for taxes. Every olive tree must pay an annual tax, not upon the actual fruitage of the year, but an arbitrary sum, whether the yield is good or bad. A man has been known to cut down an olive tree and sell the wood in order to pay the tax on the identical tree. There is no fair system of taxation as with us, and the publican now is as cordially hated as in Bible times. The taxes are farmed out to the highest bidder in some cases. Hence he must collect the sum he has agreed to pay the central government and enough more to make it his profit to do so, and it is this "enough more" that makes the poor peasant farmer suffer. Sometimes the estimate of the growing crop which is made by the government inspector shortly before harvest time is grossly inaccurate; in which case the collector suffers if the crop falls below the estimate or is enriched if the crop exceeds the estimate. In either case he is bound to care for himself first, and the peasant never gets more than the most meager livelihood.

Publicans, verse 10. Dr. John P. Peters, in his interesting book entitled Bible and Spade, writes about the papyri discovered at Oxyrhynchus in 1897 in a rubbish heap of that old town in the Fayoum, Egypt. Among them were accounts of a poll-tax, all sorts of land taxes, and taxes for every conceivable industry. There were receipts for the weaving tax, the mason tax, and the like. "In addition to the tax on land we have a tax on planting, which was levied on trees, and on the area of ground under cultivation, according to the crop cultivated; taxes on oil, beer, wine; a caravan tax; a stamp tax on the sale of objects; taxes for maintaining a watch-tower; taxes in the shape of a day's work for the maintenance of ditches, and much more. Monopolies were sold to publicans who farmed them out. We have mention of firms of these publicans who seem to do a large business, and we have also the evidence that they were not always incorruptible. In one house were found fourteen family letters from a man named Gernellus, who directs, among

other things, that presents be given to certain officials, evidently to secure some favor in the matter of remission of taxes. Another man instructs his correspondent to give at once a present to so and so, who has just been elected, 'because we can use him.' "

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Matthew's Record of the Great Physician's Work

In Chapters 5-7 Matthew groups together great words of Jesus, which we call The Sermon on the Mount, when he taught as One having authority; in Chapters 8 and 9 he groups together some of Jesus' great deeds, the miracles in whose working he acted as One having authority. It is obvious that our Evangelist recorded these miracles one after the other to give his readers with cumulative force the impression of power which Jesus made upon the people who witnessed them.

"It is this impression of power which it is important for us to get. It may or may not be that one or more of these remarkable exhibitions of power would not be called miraculous today, but the fact remains that the men who heard Jesus during his Galilean ministry came to believe that there dwelt among them a Man of unique power and commanding authority, who was able not only to make great interpretations of truth but to minister to the total need of human life. With this Man near, the misery of life grew less, self-possession returned to the mind, tempests were stilled, diseases were cured, and the sum of human happiness greatly increased."

The Hostility of the Pharisees

In the text from the ninth chapter we have the first glimpse in Matthew's Gospel of the Pharisees' hostility to Jesus. When Jesus healed the leper, he was careful to bid him show himself to the priest and be pronounced clean according to the law of Moses. The Pharisees laid great stress on the keeping of the minutest laws, and, as a rule, Jesus complied with these laws, for he had not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it. In the healing of the palsied man, Jesus claimed the right to forgive sins, which the Pharisees disputed. When he chose a publican as one of his disciples, and furthermore did not hesitate to eat with him and his friends, the Pharisees were thoroughly aroused. They could not answer his reasoning, and their hatred increased. Teachers of Intermediates will find a helpful chapter (XII) on why Jesus had enemies in Robert F. Horton's The Hero of Heroes.

The Place of Toll

The events of our lesson took place at Capernaum, on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee. The "place of toll," where Matthew sat, may have been by the lake, the toll being that collected on the fishing and the lake trade. More probably, however, it was on the outskirts of the town where toll was collected on the great Roman road running from Damascus to Egypt, which passed through Capernaum.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

This lesson should be taught in a practical way, with the aim of arousing in the pupils the will to be themselves compassionate helpers of the needy, whatever may be their need. What can our class do for the needy in our community? should be the question which some pupil in every class should be led to voice.

Mary E. Moxcey asks these pertinent questions: "Does a man in your neighborhood need a wider business acquaintance? Is his wife's mother lonely with the tragic loneliness of the elderly person separated from life-long friends? Why has that quiet, poor woman not been to class for the past few weeks? When you hear that she has died, leaving half-grown children and a husband of another religious faith, will you merely feel that it was too bad?"

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

JESUS MEETING HUMAN NEEDS

Beginning the Lesson

No one can read the Gospels without being almost overwhelmed at the thought of the way in which Jesus was beset by the afflicted and the needy. Wherever he turned, there they were waiting for him. "When he was come down from the

mountain, great multitudes followed," is Matthew's first sentence after his report of The Sermon on the Mount. "And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus," we read again in the eighth chapter. "All the city was gathered together at the door"; "When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them"; "Jesus withdrew from thence: and many followed him; and he healed them all"—and so we might keep on with sentence after sentence in the Gospels which tell us he had "no leisure so much as to eat."

Jesus saw all the pain and sorrow and tragedy of life, saw it more clearly and saw more of it than anyone either before or since, and yet he went on his way undismayed, meeting everything with a cheerful courage and an indomitable hope. Dr. J. D. Jones comments upon this, and then quotes the favorite prayer of Robert Louis Stevenson's: "Give us to go blithely on our business"—to go about it, he meant, with a cheerful spirit and a smiling face. "That was how Jesus went about his business: he went about it blithely. He was himself, if I may borrow Shelley's phrase, a 'blithe spirit.' He was brave, sunny, cheerful, hopeful." We do not often enough think of Jesus in this way. We know he was courageous and fearless; we know that while he was "meek and lowly," his righteous anger nevertheless flowed forth at times; we know that he was sympathetic and helpful at all times; but we do not often enough think of him as going about doing good blithely.

Be of Good Cheer

Here is our Lord's optimism in face of physical suffering and pain. The youth had been bemoaning his fate, rebelling, no doubt, against his helplessness, perhaps challenging the goodness of God. He saw nothing but evil in his affliction. But Christ saw more in it; he saw a Father's loving discipline. "Courage, child," he said, "all's well."

Now it is precisely at this point that the faith of so many breaks down. Our modern world is vividly sensitive to physical suffering. It is more sensitive to physical suffering than it is to moral shame. It is easier far in these days to raise money for hospitals to heal men's bodies than it is to raise money for missions to minister to their souls. And because we have become so sensitive to physical suffering, the sight of so much sickness and pain drives us almost mad. We impeach the goodness of God. We say that if there were a good God at the heart of things he would never permit it.

We treat suffering and pain as if they were mere and sheer ills. But they are not, and we know they are not. Suffering and pain may be hard to bear, but they minister to character and they enrich the soul. They make people gentle and considerate and kind; and they have led hundreds and thousands into the eternal life. The pain and sorrow of life may often perplex and trouble us, but better a world like this with all its suffering and pain than a world from which these things had been abolished. What a hard, cruel, intolerable world it would be! Even we can see as much as this. But Christ saw all this infinitely more clearly. He saw this evil and suffering made in the overruling providence of God to serve the interests of men's souls. He saw men emerge out of the discipline of pain, purer, braver, gentler, more obedient! And so in face of all the pain and distress of the world he brings us his word of confidence and cheer: "Courage, all's well." The cup that the Father gives us to drink, shall we not drink it?—J. D. Jones, in an Address.

The High Cost of Being Ill

The very poor, who can have free treatment in hospitals, and the very rich who can pay for any kind of medical and surgical treatment and nursing, can afford to be ill, but illness brings an almost intolerable financial burden upon those who are neither rich nor poor. In making their wills men and women of wealth could do no greater service with their money than by so leaving it that the expense of hospital treatment could be lessened for people of moderate means.

A committee on the cost of medical care, consisting of physicians, economists, educators, sanitarians, and laymen, and supported by various philanthropic associations and professional organizations, is now in the midst of a five-year program of research to learn why the cost of scientific medical service in hospitals is steadily mounting to a point far beyond the reach of the average citizen. The Christian Century points out that this condition prevails although physicians, as a group, are not earning adequate incomes, and questions: "What conditions prevail

in each section of the country, and what policies are being followed by physicians, health boards and sanitary commissions and hospitals? What is the condition in your own neighborhood? Is the cost of being ill prohibitive, and is the situation unfair and difficult for all parties concerned?"

Ray Lyman Wilbur, President of Stanford University and chairman of the committee investigating the medical situation, estimates that more than one million persons are engaged in the prevention and cure of diseases, that more than five billion are invested in hospitals and other equipment, and that the present cost of illness to the people of the United States is more than five billions a year.

The Church and the Healing Ministry

In answer to a correspondent's question as to why the church neglects the healing mission, Dr. Cadman writes in The New York Tribune as follows:

The co-operation of clergymen with physicians for the benefit of the sick has scriptural sanction and is greatly to be desired. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York recommended this co-operation through a recent commission of their appointment, and the report of which stated the conditions of a united ministry to body and soul.

Such a ministry finds increasing support in both vocations. It does not ignore the historic development of healing by medical science and surgery. On the contrary, it regards this development as an integral part of the general progress of Christian as distinguished from non-Christian civilization.

Neither do the churches purpose to recommit themselves to the curative vagaries of pre-scientific ages. They recognize the immense relief afforded by modern medicine and surgery.

The contrast between the impotent condition of the healing art in the time of our Lord (a condition which made his relief a necessity) and the hospitals and medicinal equipments of leading nations today is largely due to faith in him, in his Gospel and in the beneficent laws governing physical health and well-being ordained by the Father whom he revealed. The subsequent discovery and application of those laws to human necessities is one of the brightest chapters in Christian annals.

Greater Things than These Shall Ye Do

Think of the dispensaries, hospitals and asylums that have been established wherever Christianity prevails. Think of Lister's work in antiseptic surgery, Morton's work in anesthetics, Jenner's work in vaccination, Pasteur's work with antitoxins, Korbis' discovery of the tuberculosis germ, Banting's discovery of how to extract insulin, D'Hurelle's discovery of ultra-microbes, to mention only a few of the outstanding names in the warfare of science against disease. Sir William Wheeler, President of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, said not long ago that there had been more progress made in the conquest of disease in the last twenty-five years than in the previous twenty-five centuries. Think of the preventive and curative work that is being accomplished by the Rockefeller Foundation. The perusal of one of its reports is enlightening: it makes one realize what unlimited wealth consecrated to Christian uses can accomplish. "Would not Jesus rejoice, who cared so much for the bodies of men and spent so much energy upon their health?" questions a great preacher in speaking of recent progress of medical science. "I say it reverently: he healed a few people after the manner of his day, but how grateful would he be if, coming back, he should see science now fulfilling his own words, 'Greater things than these shall ye do.'"

What Makes Life Worth Living

A year or two ago one of our religious papers had a series of articles by different writers upon the topic "Why I Have Found Life Worth Living." Clarence Darrow, the well-known lawyer, declared that "a deep interest, a strong emotion, an appealing cause, has made me forget the machinery of existence in view of the ends that I have always tried to reach." Melville Trotter, the man who once was down and out, but for years has been a great mission worker, wrote: "Every day He allows me to help somebody, and I succeeded in getting myself off my hands—not living for self, but for him and for others, and that is life worth living!"

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The Great Physician. See pages 202-220 of Paterson-Smyth's People's Life of Christ.

2. Should the church be a healing church?

3. Matthew the Publican. See Chapter III of A. B. Bruce's Training of the Twelve.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. How large was the field in which Jesus directly labored? 2. Why did Jesus give the direction recorded in 10.5? 3. What is the meaning of the saying that he who prays for a harvest often gets a plow? 3. What good is there in Buddhism: Confucianism? Hinduism? Islam? 5. What changes have taken place in recent years in our attitude toward non-Christian nations? 6. Why should we believe in Christian missions? 7. Are we helping the workers?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

JESUS THE FRIEND OF THE NEEDY

Beginning the Lesson

What is our Golden Text? What prophet is Matthew here quoting? When he applied to Jesus these words of Isaiah, he must have had two great truths in mind:

First, that healing of disease was not an incidental work of Jesus, performed by a casual word and a wave of the hand, but that it was a work of love and piety, performed only by an outlay of strength, such strength as is used by one who truly sympathizes with another's distress and thus "bears his infirmities."

The other thought of Matthew's was that infirmities and diseases are symbolical of sin, that in healing them Jesus showed his power to heal sin. In the case of the palsied man, how did Jesus himself say that the exercise of the one power showed his possession of the other power?

Jesus was always the Friend of the needy, whether it was the sick or the sinner. His whole earthly ministry was crowded with sympathetic ministrations. What did he say about his mission when the Pharisees found fault with him?

Jesus the Friend of the Needy

In non-Christian lands even today the sick people—the sick in either body or mind—are not kept at home or in institutions. There are in such lands few hospitals and fewer asylums. Any sufferer who is able to crawl out into the sunshine is sick in the sight of all men. The spectacle of the sick is so common that the callousness of the beholders becomes dreadful.

A number of years ago I was in China for eight or nine weeks. I landed on a cold day, and the first fact that impressed me was the obvious suffering of the ricksha men. These men would pull a ricksha with its human freight a distance of a mile for about five cents in American money. They would move along at a sharp trot and arrive at the end of their course in a profuse state of perspiration. It was winter, and the men were clad only in cotton blouses and trousers rolled up to the knee. The result was that all were suffering with heavy colds—some of the coughing horribly suggestive of tuberculosis. A man cannot keep at ricksha work for more than six years. As I listened to the constant coughing on those first days in Shanghai I asked myself if I ever could get used to the distressing sound. How long, however, did it actually take me to get used to it? A little over ten days. After that I was as indifferent as everybody else. I confess this with shame, but my callousness was the outcome of a peculiarity of human nature which we all share pretty much alike. We set up in ourselves protective defenses against drains upon our sympathy which might otherwise wear us out.

Let us remind ourselves that Jesus never set up such defenses. He probably saw along the highways in his time as much suffering as we should see if we made a trip along a Chinese or an Indian roadway today. Yet he could not get used to the suffering. We make a mistake if we think of Jesus deliberately healing men as a large part of his plan. We are probably nearer the truth when we say that he healed men because he could not help himself. Instinctively, his soul streamed out in sympathy toward distress of all kinds as soon as he came in sight of that distress.—Francis J. McConnell.

The Founder of the Specialized Hospital

One day John Ciudad noticed a placard, "House to Let," upon an empty dwelling. He rented the house for a month; begged and succeeded in getting sufficient money

to pay the rent, and to put up cots. He filled these with beggars suffering from incurable diseases, who were literally dying, homeless, on the streets.

Every morning he went out with a basket and begged for food for them for the day, and going back to the hospital, worked alone in their service as cook, nurse, and doctor.

As months passed, the work of the man, together with his intense earnestness and self-sacrifice, attracted notice. The honesty of his purpose was so apparent that money and help were freely given to him. He opened free night lodging houses long before a poorhouse was known in England.

Up to that time, on the continent, patients with broken limbs, fevers and contagious diseases were all crowded into the same wards of the hospitals, several patients being put into one bed. John Ciudad begged money enough to build houses with separate wards and beds. He was the founder of the modern, specialized hospital.

The idea spread through southern Europe. Hospitals were founded by kings and nobles, in which men belonging to the order of "John-of-God," as he was called, were the nurses.—The Youth's Companion.

A Great Friend of the Needy

Scattered over a hillside at Saranac Lake is a collection of buildings, cottages for tuberculous patients, other cottages for the staff, medical buildings, nurses' training school, library, chapel, etc. "And all this, with the record of thousands of tuberculous invalids restored to life and activity and a place in the world—all this the fruit of the labors of a man who went into the Adirondacks to die!"

The account given by Winfred Rhoades in The Congregationalist, is here abbreviated. Dr. Trudeau was just making a fine beginning as a medical practitioner in New York when severe tuberculosis of the lungs compelled him to lay aside all his plans for life. In May, 1873, he was carried into the Adirondack wilderness, making the last forty-two miles of the journey on a mattress slung between the seats of a heavy wagon jolting over corduroy roads. There he spent his first winter sixty miles from a doctor and the railroad. Ten years later he decided to start a sanatorium at Saranac Lake. He had poor health, no funds, and no precedent for taking victims of tuberculosis into the rigors of an Adirondack winter. But he succeeded marvelously.

During the last fifteen years of his life he was afflicted with some obscure and baffling disease which made sleep a difficult matter, gave him months of acute sickness, and greatly handicapped his movements, in addition to having a renewal of his pulmonary trouble. The last five years of his life had to be spent chiefly in bed. Yet out of such difficulties, and many others too numerous to mention, this man started the first institution in this country for the treatment and study of tuberculosis, erecting scores of buildings, and, before his life was ended, collected an endowment fund of more than six hundred thousand dollars.

At the beginning, he received patients for only five dollars a week, and always the charge was less than the actual cost. It was always the people whose purses were short that this friend of suffering humanity wanted to help. His difficulties and discouragements were great, but he forced a frail body and an ignorant world to give to the country a noble and famous institution.

Sentence Sermons to Remember

The noblest question in the world is, "What good may I do in it?"—Benjamin Franklin.

When thou seest misery in thy brother's face, let him see mercy in thine eye.—Quarles.

"Somebody did a golden deed,
Somebody proved a friend in need;—
Was that somebody you?"

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Why is the figure of speech in 9.36 a striking one for Palestine? 2. Name the twelve disciples. 3. Why did Jesus tell the disciples not to go into Samaria? 4. Why did he not wish them to labor among the Gentiles? 5. What does it mean to give a "cup of cold water only"? 6. How can our class help in making Christ known to others?

THE TWELVE SENT FORTH

GOLDEN TEXT: The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest. Matthew 9-37, 38

LESSON Matthew 9.35 to 11.1 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 52.7-12

MATTHEW 9.35 And Jesus went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness. 36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd. 37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few. 38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest.

10 And he called unto him his twelve disciples, and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother; 3 Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the *son* of Alphæus, and Thaddæus; 4 Simon the Cananæan, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and charged them, saying, Go not into *any* way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans: 6 but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons: freely ye received, freely give.

40 He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. 41 He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward: and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. 42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE POWER, AUTHORITY, AND SYMPATHY OF JESUS, 9.35, 36. Jesus went about all the cities of Galilee. The Greek word translated *went about* means literally *was making a circuit of.* Josephus tells us that there were two hundred and four cities and populous villages in Galilee at this time. Jesus taught in the synagogue, and preached the gospel of the Kingdom, and healed all manner of disease and all manner of sickness: review the last lesson. Looking upon the multitudes he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd. They were vexed by needless burdens and uncared for by their professed religious teachers, the scribes and Pharisees. The figure of speech was a striking one to his hearers, for their sheep were not pastured in enclosed fields, but wandered freely in uninhabited regions where there were wild beasts and other dangers, and they were in constant need of a shepherd's care. In the Metropolitan Museum, New York, there hangs a striking picture of a lost flock of sheep. It portrays sheep and dogs hopelessly lost in the midst of a drifting snowstorm, distressed and scattered, and it makes one realize a little of what was in the mind of Jesus as he said these words.

May we not see in the sympathy of Jesus the source, in part, of his power to do his wonderful deeds of mercy? It impelled him to do Herculean tasks in teaching and preaching and healing. It impelled him also to send out his disciples to help in the work. And what about our multitudes? Despite our magnificent churches, despite the preaching of sincere and able ministers, despite Christian efforts in all directions there are vast multitudes in our Christian land who are without the Shepherd of souls. Despite the multiplication of Bibles, there are multitudes of homes in which the Word of God is seldom read. The harvest truly is plenteous.

II. THE HARVEST AND THE WORKERS, 9.37, 38. To Jesus multitudes seemed like a vast field ready for reaping, and he said to his disciples, "The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest (my Father is the Husbandman, Jn. 15.1) that he send laborers forth into

his harvest." Pray ye therefore: prove him herewith, and see if he will not be true to his promise, that whatsoever you ask, believing, you will receive.

"'Lo,' you cry, 'the whitening fields!
Happy who the sickle wields!'
All unnoticed at thy feet
Christly tasks thy hands entreat!" (Anna Burnham Bryant)

III. THE TWELVE SENT ON A MISSION TOUR, 10.1. Jesus had already chosen his twelve disciples, and now he sent them out two by two, as Mark tells us, that they might gain training in his work, for he would work through them. He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness. They were "illiterate Galilean peasants" for the most part, but they were the best men he could get.

IV. THE NAMES OF THE TWELVE, 10.2-4. There are four complete lists of the apostles: Matthew 10.2-4; Mark 3.16-19; Luke 6.14-16; and Acts 1.13. In all the lists they are arranged in four groups. The first of the first group is always Peter; that of the second Philip; that of the third James; and that of the fourth Alphæus. The order of the remaining three in each group varies in the different lists, save that Judas Iscariot is always the last one mentioned.

Simon, who is called Peter (Rock), and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother. We heard about these two pairs of brothers in our second lesson. Peter and Andrew were natives of Bethsaida; and possibly James and John were also.

Philip was a fellow townsman of Andrew and Peter; see John 6.5-14; 12.20, 21; 14.8, 9. Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus in the latter part of the second century, refers to Philip as "one of the lights of Asia." Bartholomew (called Nathanael in John 1.45; 21.2) is always coupled with Philip in the lists of the apostles, save in Acts 1.13. We think of him as Jesus portrayed him at his call, as the Israelite in whom was no guile (John 1.47). Of Thomas nothing is recorded in the Synoptic Gospels. The Fourth Gospel records his courage and devotion to his Master (John 11.16), his questions in the Upper Room (John 14.5), and his expressed doubt in regard to the reality of the Risen Lord until fully convinced (John 20.19, 20). Matthew, the publican, the writer of the Gospel we are studying, is called Levi in Luke 5.27, and Levi the son of Alphæus in Matthew.

James the son of Alphæus is called James the Less, or rather the Little, in Mark 15.40; probably he was short of stature and was thus distinguished from the other James, the son of Zebedee. He must not be confounded with James "the Lord's brother," who is a conspicuous figure in the history of The Acts and to whom the Epistle of James is ascribed. Thaddæus is identified with Judas (son or brother, R.V.) of James (Luke 6.16) and the Judas not Iscariot of John 14.22. In Mark 3.18 he is called Lebbæus. He is more remembered for his names than for his deeds, for nothing is recorded of him save his question in John 14.22. Simon the Cananæan is called Simon Zelotes in Luke. The designation *Cananæan* is supposed to refer to his birthplace of Cana; the *Zealot,* to his being a member of the party of Zealots, a party conspicuous for their fierce advocacy of the Mosaic ritual and their abhorrence of foreign rule. And Judas Iscariot who also betrayed him: *Iscariot* means literally *Man of Kerioth,* a village near Hebron. He is the only Judean in the list, the other eleven being men of Galilee. He was the treasurer of the band of apostles (John 12.6; 13.29). He betrayed his Lord, and on the night of the trial hanged himself (Matthew 27.3-5).

"There are wide varieties in the characters of the men chosen, which shows that there is room for all diversities in Christ's service, and shows the uniting power of the Christian faith" (Alexander Maclaren).

V. THE CHARGE TO THE TWELVE, 10.5-33. These Twelve Jesus sent forth. From the Greek word *apostellein,* translated *sent forth,* is derived our word *apostle.* Jesus limited their mission tour to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," charging them not to go among the Gentiles nor Samaritans. The gospel must first be offered to the Jews, and afterwards to the Gentiles. Moreover, with their inborn hatred of Gentiles and Samaritans, the Twelve were not yet ready to labor among them, and Jesus wisely restricted their field to the Jews, among whom they would receive a welcome.

So today most followers of Jesus are sent to those nearest and best known, with whom they have special relationships, whom they may influence by their deeds or by their own Christian lives, rather than to those afar off whom they know not.

Their message was to be that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. This had been the proclamation of John the Baptist and of Jesus himself when he began his ministry in Galilee.

Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons; freely (gratis, without pay) ye received, freely give.

"The gospel of the road is a ministering gospel. Go where the sick are, go where the lepers are, go where the crazy are, go where the dead are. Go there because you are needed there. Go there because the gospel you have to preach has something to give to meet this need. It is a ministering gospel. They that are whole have no need of the physician, but the sick" (Rockwell Harmon Potter).

Read the further words of counsel which Jesus gave his disciples, verses 9-33.

VI. THE COST OF THE SERVICE, 10.34-39.

VII. THE REWARDS OF THE SERVICE, 10.40-42. In verse 15 Jesus said what would befall those who would not receive his messengers: now he says that those who do receive them shall be rewarded. He that received the apostles was receiving their Master, and he that received their Master was receiving the Father who had sent him.

"To listen to this Man, who spake as no other man spake, no wonder that crowds thronged; but it was not so easy to give attention to the crude, raw Peter or the hesitating, doubtful Thomas, or even the fiery and loved John. Still Jesus sends his missionaries, men who have had some vision of him, or got from others some vision of a vision of him; still he says to men, He that receives my messenger, my disciple, my gospeler, the one who is doing my mission, receives me. If you cannot receive the Infinite, receive the finite manifestation of the Infinite. To receive the messenger of Christ is to receive Christ; to receive Christ is to receive the God who manifests himself in human guise" (Lyman Abbott).

He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, that is, because he is a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

"It is at least possible that we may not treat the prophet rightly when he comes among us. If so, we shall certainly harm ourselves, and it may be make the prophet less of a prophet than he was. Let us hear in his voice whatever truth the Spirit of God brings home to our mind and consciences. Let us recognize at the same time that the man is a human being who may easily be harmed by us and even tempted to his ruin as a spiritual being. When Mr. Moody was in Birmingham, Dr. Dale was struck by his power of making the elementary truths of the gospel clear. 'But it still seemed,' he wrote, 'most remarkable that he should have done so much, and I told Mr. Moody that the work was most plainly of God, for I could see no real relation between him and what he had done. Moody laughed cheerily and said he should be very sorry if it were otherwise.' That was surely the right way of looking at the facts, and because he did look at them in this way, Moody was never spoiled by the vast audiences which gathered around him. Dale received Moody in the name of a prophet, that is, as one through whom Another speaks and acts" (G. H. Morrison).

He that gives only a cup of cold water to one of the disciples because he is a disciple shall by no means lose his reward.

"It is true, and it is a great comfort that it is true, that the giving of a glass of water can please God, and the sweeping of a room can glorify him. But woe be to us if we are content with small services. Too much thought of little things belittles. We should 'attempt great things for God.' Let us not be easily content. The note of heroism should be in our battles with sin,

in our speaking, in our giving, in our serving. Our King deserves and expects kingliness" (Maltbie D. Babcock).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

He that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me, 10.40. Scholars tell us that the coldness and vagueness of the Jewish conception of God immediately before the Christian era may be judged by the way men spoke of him. The primitive name of Jehovah, with its vivid note of personality, had lapsed into disuse. Theoretically it was too sacred to be pronounced, and the scribes when they came to it in the reading of the Scriptures inserted another word in its place. Dr. Anderson Scott in his book, Dominus Noster, points out that even the name "God" had fallen more and more into disuse. Men used instead all manner of roundabout phrases. They spoke of the Almighty, or the Holy One, or, more often, Heaven. When the Prodigal Son said, "I have sinned against heaven," he was using the vocabulary that was prevalent at that time, and the vagueness of such expressions corresponded to the vagueness and pallor in men's thought of God. He was a cold abstraction, far removed from life and its needs.—The British Weekly.

A cup of cold water only, 10.42. It is mentioned as a very little gift; but, as a modern traveler says: "In this hot and dry land, where one can wander for hours without coming on a brook or an accessible cistern, you say 'Thank you' for a drink of fresh water with very different feelings than you do at home."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Although Matthew names the Twelve in connection with his report of their being sent on their mission, yet the first four disciples had been called by Jesus soon after his baptism and temptation, and early in his Galilean ministry he had chosen the Twelve for the privileges of constant, intimate discipleship. We have now reached the time when Jesus' popularity was at its height. The Twelve had been with him and had learned his purpose and spirit: now he sends them forth to impart their knowledge to others. Hitherto they had been disciples; now they become apostles, messengers, missionaries.

It is early in A.D. 29, and the place is somewhere in Galilee. The disciples go in pairs, and therefore in different circuits, and may cover Galilee fairly well in a tour of several weeks' duration.

The "field" of Jesus' labors during his public ministry was very small. His entire time was spent in the districts of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee west of the Jordan and Perea east of that river, save for two brief visits northward, one to the region of Tyre and Sidon in Phœnicia, and the other to the region of Cæsarea Philippi. Practically all of his ministry that is recorded by Matthew was in Galilee, a district not so large as the State of Delaware.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

It was Victor Hugo who said that "there is nothing quite so powerful in the world as an idea whose time has come," and the reverse of that statement is equally true, that there is nothing so futile as an idea whose time is past.

The Jews looked with contempt upon the Samaritans, therefore Jesus charged them on this early missionary tour of theirs not to enter into any Samaritan city. They must learn that even Samaritans are brothers before they can work successfully among them. We no longer send out missionaries to work among "the heathen" whom we despise, and that word "heathen" is not used in connection with our work among the educated, cultured people of the non-Christian faiths. No longer is our attitude toward them that of a dominating benevolent superiority; rather is it that of a co-operating, brotherly respect.

The disciples saw no good in the Samaritan religion, and it is a serious failing in our missionary work if we do not recognize the good as well as the evil in other faiths. Read the utterances of the International Missionary Council given under our first topic.

The Jews of Jesus' day thought that no Gentile should be invited to share the gospel with them unless he first became a Jewish proselyte. In the past we have felt that other peoples should take our western civilization along with our Christianity, but that has proved a fallacy.

In this changing world of ours, missionary work has greatly changed, and if the church-school teacher has not the new outlook, he should acquire it. Read carefully Dr. Diffendorfer's words quoted under the first topic.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

RECRUITING CHRISTIAN WORKERS

Beginning the Lesson

The Latin poet, Horace, called the crowd in the Forum "pigs," thought of them as "swine," and said, "I hate the vulgar crowd." And when Seneca witnessed the strife between the plebeians and the patricians, the brawls of gladiators and the crimes of slaves, he was moved with contempt and called the people wolves that rave, tigers that snarl, serpents that carry the sting of poison and of death. Barons of the Middle Ages beheld the multitude and were moved with cupidity and avarice, and made the people serfs. But when Christ saw the multitude he said nothing about the wolf, the swine, or the serpent. He saw them as sheep that had no shepherd. Sheep? The lamb is the emblem of innocence! As sheep? The fleece is the emblem of warmth and the wool the emblem of wealth. The sheep organizes no warfare, carries no deadly weapon, and when it wanders into the place where wolves lie in waiting the wandering is through ignorance. Once it hears the shepherd's voice, it seeks the place of safety. The diameter of the universe is between Christ's attitude toward the multitude, with his compassion and his sympathy, and those other leaders, the tyrants, the barons, the cruel leaders, who despise the poor and the weak.—Newell Dwight Hillis.

The Harvest is Plenteous

There was once a man—so runs the Highland tale—who saw not as other men saw, for he had anointed eyes. Once, when he was little more than a child, he had lain among the heather on a summer's day, when the honey oozed in the purple cups, and, dreaming of the Beauty that is above beauty, his heart filled with a great wistful yearning. Then it was as if a hand was thrust out from among the purple spires and touched his eyes. The boy went home trembling, and from that day he saw with a vision all his own. He would stand in bleak, waste, stony places and cry out at the beauty of them, for to him they seemed fair and verdant, and touched with eternal light. His father, angry at the boy's abnormality which made him the laughing-stock of the hamlet, sent him away to the squalid city slums where vice and misery meet; but it made no difference. To the lad's eyes the grimy alleys were beautiful with a strange glory, and the faces of the people sweet and pure, and their souls redeemed to dazzling whiteness. And gradually the laughter of those who mocked at him turned to reverence, and one said to another, "He has the white light of God upon his brow. He has been touched with the chrism of the Spirit. He is an anointed man."

The old story is a parable. We often see the waste places of earth and the waste places of humanity with a clearness which tends to kill hope. And if perchance one here and there sees beauty where others see ugliness, it is, for the most part, because he has shut his eyes to the facts and swathed himself in dreams. We know these dreamers—so lofty and inspiring on the surface, so small and selfish on a closer view. It is easy to shut one's eyes to squalor and spin fancies of deathless beauty—easy, if one has an active imagination and that trick of self-deception which, in some form or other, is the besetting sin of humanity. But there standeth One among us whose dream is supreme reality; One whose eyes discern ugliness and evil where ours can see nothing amiss, and discovers beauty and wonder where we only see the gray and dusty veil that shrouds them; One in whose divine vision truth and beauty meet together. He looks out upon the waste places of life and says, "The harvest truly is plenteous."

Can that really be so? We see nothing but stones. We see the tares choking the wheat. We see the indifferent, pleasure-loving multitudes in revolt not only against Christ, but even against ordinary Christian morality and decency. We see even those who champion the cause of truth and right defiled and dragged down by selfishness, commercialism, hardness of heart, blindness to eternal issues.

"When he saw the multitude he had compassion upon them, because they were as sheep without a shepherd." The multitude was careless, selfish, godless—yes; but these were not the things that concerned our Lord primarily and supremely. The

one great fact that overshadowed all the rest was that they were shepherdless. Once that fact sinks into the mind, judgment dies upon the lips. Who would judge a frightened, straying sheep? Who would judge a wild, wayward street-arab? There is no room for a negative policy of warnings and prohibitions in such a situation. The one thing that matters is that the multitudes should find their Shepherd, and neither man nor nation has ever been denounced or castigated into the arms of the Savior. There is only one way of saving either an individual or a community—by "loving them out of the pit." It was the way of God. It must be our way, if we wish to call ourselves his children.—E. Herman, in The Christian.

Christian Workers

In my thirty-five and more years of work among the nations, never has the missionary undertaking seemed to me to be so difficult as at present. Never have our Christian forces seemed to be so inadequate for the task. In my judgment, the next fifteen years will be the most difficult in the history of Christian religion. Not because of the forces which oppose us; nor because we are called on to deal with so many great issues simultaneously; nor because of the stern challenges that are sounding in the ears of the churches of all lands; but principally for the encouraging reason that never before have so many Christians awakened to the awful implications of the Christian Gospel. Thank God, we have come to a time when large numbers of followers of Jesus Christ seem to think that he meant what he said, and believe with depth of conviction that he must be Lord of all or not at all, and are dominated by the vision of the kingdoms of this world becoming the Kingdom of our Lord. At such a time, we need to utilize the united wisdom and experience and the sacrificial devotion of Christians of every name.—John R. Mott.

Other Sheep I Have, which Are not of This Fold: Them also I Must Bring

We rejoice to think that just because in Jesus Christ the light which lighteth every man shone forth in its full splendor, we find rays of that same light where he is unknown; or even is rejected.

We welcome every noble quality in non-Christian persons or systems as further proof that the Father, who sent his Son into the world, has nowhere left himself without witness.

Thus merely to give illustration, and making no attempt to estimate the spiritual value of other religions to their adherents, we recognize as part of the one truth:

That sense of the majesty of God, and the consequent reverence in worship, which are conspicuous in Islam; the deep sympathy for the world's sorrow and the unselfish search for the way of escape, which are at the heart of Buddhism; the desire for contact with ultimate reality conceived as spiritual, which is prominent in Hinduism; the belief in a moral order of the universe and consequent insistence on moral conduct, which are inculcated by Confucianism; the disinterested pursuit of truth and of human welfare which are often found in those who stand for secular civilization but do not accept Christ as their Lord and Savior.

We call on the followers of non-Christian religions to join with us in the study of Jesus Christ, his place in the life of the world and his power to satisfy the human heart; to hold fast to faith in the unseen and eternal in face of the growing materialism of the world; to co-operate with us against all the evils of secularism; to respect freedom of conscience so that men may confess Christ without separation from home and friends; and to discern that all the good of which men have conceived is fulfilled and secured in Christ.—The International Missionary Council at Jerusalem.

The New Attitude of Non-Christian Nations to Christian Nations

There is a new spirit, a new wholesome spirit, abroad in the world and both in the administration and in the teaching of missions this new spirit must be considered.

What is this new spirit among the nations? It is an awakening of races and peoples to a realization of their own worth.

It finds expression in many ways: in a desire and quest after political freedom, in opposition to foreign exploitation and overlordship, in a desire to become recognized as equal to any other group, sometimes in a feeling of the inferiority of those who have hitherto asserted superiority, in a cherishing of the things of their own civilization and religion against the attack or ridicule or aspersions cast by Anglo-Saxons and Christians upon them. In China it takes the form of an attempt to set up a real republic and to rid the country of the evils of exploitation and unequal treaties

with the Treaty Powers. In India it takes the form of agitation for "home rule" and for non-co-operation by Indians in the social and economic enterprises superimposed upon the people by the government and the industrial men of Great Britain. In Africa it takes the form of demands for better labor conditions, better regard for human life, more equitable sharing by the native in the products of that vast continent. And so one might go to every land and nation and find it awakening to a realization of its own value to the world and its own rights at the hands of other peoples of the world.

The awakening is a missionary goal in the development of races and nations greatly to be desired. Some of the growing pains may be distressful, but the growth is healthy. Americans, above all peoples, should understand and sympathize with this spiritual awakening, for it is, on a world-scale, what took place in the Colonies in 1776 and in the agitated years that preceded the Declaration of Independence in America. Christians, especially, should understand and appreciate the awakening, for has it not for centuries been a goal of Christ's teachings, and for decades an indirect goal of mission education?

The awakening has, in fact, resulted very largely from the broadcasting through Asia of the principles of Jesus Christ. Asia is realizing that other Christian nations must also realize it as one of the chief causes—and glory in it. Missionaries and those "at home" who are sending missionaries overseas must glory it it, too. It is the greatest thing in the world today—the spirit of Jesus Christ moving among the races and nations.—Ralph E. Diffendorfer, in The International Journal of Religious Education.

The New Attitude of Christian Nations to Non-Christian Nations

Upon the field of religious and missionary education, this new spirit of the races makes three demands: first, it demands a new attitude of mind and spirit toward the peoples to whom we are sending missionaries and for whose welfare in the Christian way of life we are giving our moneys; secondly, it demands that Christian people in America and in Europe frankly face the failures to apply the teachings of Christ to phases of life in these lands, and that they make an honest effort to bring about such social adjustment as will lift the life of so-called Christian nations nearer the Christ ideal; and thirdly, it demands that our Christian people realize that it is a spiritual gift and not an institutional gift they are giving Africa and the Orient in the person and teaching of Christ; and that they permit Oriental and African Christians to take that spiritual gift and spread it by means of organization and institutions growing out of their own social heritage and genius, rather than by the transplanting of bodies and institutions suitable only to Anglo-Saxon temperament. Let us consider these three demands in more detail, for they must be met in any adequate program of missionary education today.

Twenty years ago a missionary speaker might have described any mission land as,

"Where the skies forever smile
And the oppressed forever weep"

—but he would not do so today. For one thing, the nationals of the land he was thus describing today know that all is not smiles and happiness and Christian joy in America and in Europe. They still remember the World War; they read newspapers—and their newspapers are not slow to tell them of lynchings in America and of injustices practiced the world over by Anglo-Saxons—economic injustices, social injustices, injustices of man to man. And the national would not be uneager to tell that missionary speaker what he has read or seen of these conditions.

Instead, the missionary speaker today is telling his audiences not only of the needs but also of the good qualities, of the native abilities, of the inherent worthwhileness to the world of the peoples among whom he labors. And he pictures to them what he has seen of Christ living and moving among individuals and groups of this race, and what will happen when that whole people is actuated and motivated by the same Christian principles and ideals as are these comparative few who now call themselves Christians. There may be some who would still prefer to give their sons as missionaries and their money as fuel in the cause, to help some "heathen" whose "inferiority" they acknowledge and never expect to see completely wiped out—but those givers are gradually making way for those who believe in the essential capacity and ability of folk even in the lowest rung of the ladder of civilization to develop into educated and cultured men and women. And it is that new appreciation of

the worthwhileness of peoples that must be the basis of future religious and missionary education.

While in our teaching we show the worthwhileness of these men and women as children of God, we avoid also the other extreme. It is easy to paint a fascinating picture of India, for example, telling of her fine arts, her wonderful literature, the beauties of the land itself, the dignity and spiritual insight of her greatest leaders, and leave only the question in the hearer's mind, "Why, then, send missionaries to India?" We need, indeed, to state the best there is in India, but we need also to remember and to place in their proper perspective on the completed canvas, child-marriage, child-widows, caste, evils growing out of some temple practices, lack of sanitation, poverty, ignorance, etc. If "Mother India" is a lop-sided picture, so is the other picture that many young intellectual Indians, resident in America and in England, present in magazine articles: the true likeness must show both in proper perspective.

This new generation of white Christians must honestly and fearlessly discover what is wrong with Western civilization as it applies or fails to apply Christ's teaching to every phase of life. It must set about cleaning its own house of race prejudice, of crime, of industrial and social and political wrongs, of greed and avarice, while it hopes to make the Orient more eager than it is today to accept more of our civilization or of our Christianity.—Ralph E. Diffendorfer, in The International Journal of Religious Education.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The Twelve and their mission. See Chapters IV and VIII of A. B. Bruce's The Training of the Twelve; Pages 271-280, 288-297 of Paterson-Smyth's People's Life of Christ; Lectures IV and V of Wm. F. McDowell's In the School of Christ ($1.00).

2. The present crisis in Christian missions. Inevitable handicaps in missionary work. See Chapters IX and X of The Missionary Idea in Life and Religion, by J. E. McFadyen ($1.50).

3. The changes taking place in the Christian claim to exclusive divine origin and monopolistic possession of divine truth.

4. Why Christian education is basic for the missionary enterprise. "Because it cultivates and promotes the experience of God as Father and man as a son of God which necessarily impels one to go to the ends of the earth with the gospel. All of every race and color have that same religious nature which is capable of apprehending God and cannot be satisfied but in him."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What other records in this eleventh chapter show the moral isolation of Jesus? 2. What do you think was the *animus* of John's question? 3. Was it strange that John was thus affected? 4. Was Jesus' reply satisfying? 5. When the Pharisees asked Jesus for the sign of his identity, what was his reply? (Matthew 12.38, 39.) 6. What does Jesus say about his works in John 10.37, 38? 7. What is some of the teaching of Jesus about himself as recalled in the Synoptic Gospels? 8. In John? 9. To whom does the Son will to reveal the Father? 10. Who do you say Jesus is?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

HELPING TO WIN THE WORLD FOR CHRIST

Beginning the Lesson

Did you ever see a sign in a store window on which was written, "Office-boy wanted?" Did the sign stay there long? Why not? The call is seldom sent out for workers in store or shop or factory without bringing more applicants than are needed. Jesus once sent out a call for workers which has been repeated through the centuries and has not yet had a response sufficient for the work. What was it? (Continue with Explanations and Comments. See also Chapter XIV of Robert F. Horton's Young Peoples' Life of Christ, $1.50.)

Freely ye Received, freely Give

To an Englishman who was in great financial distress in Paris Benjamin Franklin wrote the following note: "I send you herewith ten louis. I am not presenting the sum to you; only lending it. When you return to your country some useful activity cannot fail to put you in a position where you can pay all your debts. And when

you meet some one who is embarrassed as you are at present, pay your debt to me by lending the same amount under similar circumstances. In this way the money will go through many hands, before it reaches an evil man who stops its progress. This is my way of doing much good with little means."

This Englishman received freely Franklin's aid, but he was under obligations to pass the amount on as freely. It is always one's duty to make a return to others for whatever gifts one has received freely from God. " 'What have we done?' asked the priest and the Levite in astonishment. 'What have we done to be held up for the blame of the centuries in this way? We didn't hurt the poor fellow who had fallen among thieves. Indeed, we really pitied him as we passed by.' 'It is not what you did, but what you did not do,' replied the Master. 'You might have helped him, but you did not.' "

How One Woman Helped in the Harvest

When Livingstone went to Africa there was a Scotch woman named Mrs. MacRoberts, quite advanced in life, who had saved thirty pounds, which she gave to the great missionary, saying: "When you go to Africa, I want you to spare yourself exposure and needless toil by hiring some competent body-servant, who will go with you wherever you go, and share your sacrifices and exposures."

With that money he hired his faithful servant known as Sebalwe. When the lion had thrown Livingstone down and crushed the bones of his left arm, and was about to kill him, this man, seeing his critical condition, drew off the attention of the lion to himself, thinking that he would save his master at the cost of his own life. The lion sprang at him, but just at that moment the guns of other companions brought the lion down, and Livingstone's life was prolonged for thirty years. Surely, that noble Scotch woman, as well as the servant, should be credited with some, at least, of the results of the noble devotion of that great missionary.—F. B. Meyer.

Cups of Water

"I think it is a very little thing to do," Fanny Clare said, as she buttoned her kid gloves. "Just think! nothing but a cup of water. I would give that much to anybody."

"It wasn't so very easy," Miss Holden said. "In that warm country where water was so scarce it involved some sacrifice. But, Fanny, do you remember the 'because'? 'Whosoever shall give the cup of water because ye belong to Christ.' "

"Oh, well!" Fanny said, "I don't see as that made any difference."

"Do move along! How you do jam up against one!" This remark was made by Fanny Clare, not to Miss Holden, but to Ruth Peckham, a little girl who sat next to her in a faded dress and broken, sun-burned straw hat. Miss Holden apparently took no notice, and while she questioned some others in the class, Fanny Clare whispered to Laura Goodwin, who sat on the other side: "What a little fright that girl is! Should you think she would like to be in the class with us?"

Detaining Fanny a moment after class, Miss Holden asked: "Did you find the cup of water easy to give?"

"Ma'am?" said Fanny in bewilderment.

"Why, you had a little one who 'belonged' to Christ right beside you. Did you fill a cup with kindness for her?"

Fanny blushed, and she had nothing to say.—Herald and Presbyter.

Sentence Sermons

"This is the way the disciples run:
Peter and Andrew, James and John,
Philip and Bartholomew,
Thomas next, and Matthew, too,
James the 'less,' and Judas (the greater),
Simon the zealot, and Judas the traitor."

Not by mere moods may I know whether I am living the life of God, but only by knowing that God is using me to help others.—Phillips Brooks.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Why is John the Baptist in prison? 2. At Matthew's feast, what question had been asked by John's disciples? 3. What did John the Baptist say that Jesus would do, Matthew 3.11-14? 4. What did John mean by the phrase "he that cometh"? 5. How was Jesus' reply to John's messengers a satisfactory one?

JESUS TEACHING ABOUT HIMSELF

GOLDEN TEXT: Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11.28

LESSON Matthew 11.2 to 12.50 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 61.1-10

MATTHEW 11.2 Now when John heard in the prison the works of the Christ, he sent by his disciples 3 and said unto him, Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another? 4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and tell John the things which ye hear and see: 5 the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them. 6 And blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me.

25 At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: 26 yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight. 27 All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal *him*. 28 Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. WHAT JESUS SAID ABOUT HIMSELF TO JOHN THE BAPTIST, 11.2-6. John the Baptist had been imprisoned at Machærus by Herod, and when his disciples came and told him what Jesus was doing, he sent them to Jesus to ask, "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" "He that cometh" is a phrase for the Messiah, derived, it is believed, from Psalm 118.26. As Dr. Bruce comments, by this time John had been a prisoner for some time, long enough to develop a "prison mood." When John was free he had been the first to recognize that Jesus was the Coming One, the Messiah, but in his imprisonment he had grown doubtful, for to that caged eagle Jesus seemed too mild in his dealings with men to be the expected avenger, the Christ as he had pictured him.

"There is only one Man with whom it is always high-water; all others have ebbs and flows in their religious life, and variations in their grasp of truth" (Alexander Maclaren).

John's disciples found Jesus busy with the very work that had disappointed John. The sick were coming to him and he encouraged their coming; to the poor he proclaimed the gospel, but uttered no word about the fire or the ax of which John had spoken (Matthew 3.10-12). Jesus stopped his work to answer John's messengers. "Go and tell John," he said, "the things which ye hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them—all a fulfillment of the prophecy as to the Messiah in Isaiah 35.5, 6; 61.1. "'Tell your story over again and remind him of those prophetic texts. Let him study the two together and draw his own conclusion.' It was a virtual invitation to John to revise his Messianic idea, in the hope he would discern that after all *love* was the chief Messianic charism" (A. B. Bruce).

The miracles were Jesus' credentials. They proved his divine power, and they revealed his divine sympathy. They were "signs," as they are called in the Fourth Gospel, recorded "in order that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in his name."

"To me these acts of healing and restoration, whether of the soul or of the body, are not incredible. I do not regard them miracles in the sense of violation of the laws of Nature, but as manifestations of spiritual power, and as wrought through knowledge of spiritual laws in the obscure domain where soul impinges on body. Almost as important as their truth is the disposition of Jesus revealed in them" (Dean Worcester).

There was no word of rebuke for John's lack of faith, but this gentle message was added: "And blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me": Happy is the one who is not disturbed by the methods I use, by my ways of fulfilling my mission.

John must have understood. He had not been mistaken in bearing his testimony to Jesus as the Christ, but only in expecting the whirlwind instead of the still, small voice. His preconceived expectation of the way in which Jesus would carry on his mission was wrong and the cause of his uncertainty. "Perplexity in regard to Christ arises from a deficiency of light upon the personality of Christ. When you are swept by a train into a dark tunnel and are compelled to stop reading, it is not new eyes which you need nor a new book, but light. And you wait until you issue from the darkness and begin again. That is precisely the relation of all perplexed souls in regard to Christ. Insufficient light, no light, or false light are the sources of perplexity."

II. WHAT JESUS SAID ABOUT JOHN THE BAPTIST, 11.11-15.

III. THE ILLOGICAL ATTITUDE OF THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS TOWARD JESUS AND HIS HERALD, 11.16-19.

IV. JESUS' CONDEMNATION OF CERTAIN CITIES FOR THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD HIM, 11.20-24.

V. JESUS GIVES THANKS FOR HIS FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS, 11.25, 26. Jesus then turned his thought gratefully to those who had received his message, and thanked his Heavenly Father for having made his revelation, not to those who thought themselves wise and understanding, the scribes and Pharisees, but to "babes," unlearned people who with a true, childlike spirit had accepted his teaching. Compare Matthew 18.34 and 1 Corinthians 1.26-30. "Yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight." "Jesus answered and said," we read, but the answer was not necessarily to anything said; rather was it to the general situation in which he found himself. "These things," may not have had any definite antecedent, but may refer to his general teaching.

"It was given to tentmakers and fishermen to see truths not seen by prophets and kings; it was given to a peasant's son to find for Christendom the divine doctrine it had lost; it was given to a tinker in Bedford to have visions of God as Isaiah and Ezekiel had; it was given to Wesley's 'ragged regiment' to see truths of life hidden from the wise and prudent; it was given to a Northamptonshire cobbler to seize afresh and to give practical efficacy to the magnificent truth of the universality of salvation in Jesus Christ" (W. L. Watkinson).

VI. JESUS' TEACHING ABOUT HIMSELF, 11.27-30. It is usual to call verses 25-27 a prayer, "but it is at once prayer, praise, and self-communing in a devout spirit. In communing with himself Jesus added that no one fully knew him, the Son, save the Father, from whom all things had been delivered unto him. And no one knew God save the Son and him to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him. That the Son wills to reveal the Father to everyone is shown in the universal invitation which immediately follows. "Jesus says in effect: 'The wise despise me; but they cannot do without me. Through me alone can they obtain that knowledge of God which they profess to desire above all things.' This was there and then the simple historical fact. Jesus was the one Person in Israel who truly conceived God."

"Jesus moves in a region of absolute certainty, speaking of God with the confidence of One who possesses the most intimate relations with him. He never makes the demonstration of God any part of his vocation; on the contrary, he assumes that the organ by which God is apprehended is different from the intellect, when he says, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God'; and he confirms the impression that, according to his view, the knowledge of God is peculiarly the perquisite of the simple and the pure, when he says, 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes'" (James Stalker).

Then followed the gracious invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "The passage is to be taken metaphorically. The kind of people Jesus expects to become 'disciples indeed' are those who have sought long, earnestly, but in vain, for the *summum bonum,* the knowledge of God. There is no burden so heavy as that of truth sought and not found. Scholars of

the rabbis, like Saul of Tarsus, knew it well. In coming thence to Christ's school, they would find rest by passing from letter to spirit, from form to reality, from hearsay to certainty, from traditions of the past to the present voice of God" (A. B. Bruce).

"When the heart submits, then Jesus reigns: and when Jesus reigns, there is rest" (J. Hudson Taylor).

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me," that is, become my disciples, "and ye shall find rest unto your souls." The "Yoke of the Law" expressed the burdensome nature of the ordinance imposed by the rabbis, and Jesus expressed the thought that his yoke is not burdensome by adding, "for I am meek and lowly in heart." Christ's yoke is just his way of taking life, writes Henry Drummond, and it is an easier way than any other; it is also a happier way. "My yoke does not consist of a multitude of burdensome ordinances like that of the Law and of the Pharisees. True, there are certain ordinances which every Christian observes, but they are few and simple. The essence of my religion is that men should be humble, and meek and loving and tender hearted as I am, not hard and proud like the Pharisees."

"We have perverted the meaning of the word *meek* to almost the opposite of the meaning given by our Lord. In our day a meek man is usually regarded as a weak man, one who is entirely lacking in the fine granite foundations of a masculine manhood. We can scarcely realize that as the Lord Jesus used the word it was significant of abounding and useful strength. When some wild colt had been broken in and no longer raced about the wide field in useless liberty, he was described by the ancient Greeks as 'meek.' It was not that his strength had been in the slightest degree diminished; it was only kept within restraint and was surrendered to useful services. And our Lord describes himself as holding his infinite strength at the disposal of exhausted men and women. He is waiting to be harnessed to our load, waiting to carry our burdens. 'I am meek,' and yield my consecrated strength to the ministry of men!" (J. H. Jowett).

"Many of our sorrows come from pride, from self-importance. But the moment we can forget ourselves, we are free; we have tranquillity of mind, rest in our souls" (William Lyon Phelps).

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." "The yoke is like the plumage of a bird, which adds to its weight, but enables it to soar to the sky" (St. Augustine).

"We approve the adjectives; too often we ignore the nouns. The truest comfort comes through submission to the divine claims; and in the recognition of the fact that true religion involves a yoke of obedience and a burden of responsibility towards God and man."

VII. THE SON OF MAN LORD OF THE SABBATH, 12. 1-13.
VIII. DEADLY HATRED OF THE PHARISEES, 12.14.
IX. JESUS HEALS MANY, 12.15-21.
X. DISCOURSE FOLLOWING THE CURE OF A DEMONIAC, 12.22-37.
XI. THE PHARISEES' CRAVING FOR A SIGN REBUKED, 12.38-45.
XII. THE KINDRED OF JESUS, 12.46-50.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

My yoke is easy, 11.30. The oriental yoke is a clumsy affair that galls the shoulders and strains the neck of the ox. Orientals use the word figuratively for a rule of conduct. The rabbis imposed burdensome rules on the people, made the yoke grievous for them to bear.

My burden is light, 11.30. Because many streets in the East are too narrow and winding for wagons, huge packages are carried by human burden-bearers. In Palestine Explored, James Neil says: "I have often gazed at these poor fellows with mingled wonder and pity as I have seen them staggering past me along the broken and slippery stone paths of the streets of Jerusalem, bowed down under burdens so huge in bulk and so heavy in weight as to seem altogether beyond human strength. Were not the physical powers of these peasants developed in a very remarkable degree they could not engage all day long in such work. In the prophets, the 'burden' is

used as a most expressive metaphor to set forth the denunciation of heavy judgments. Our Lord, too, has a plain reference to the toil of the *atal* or porter."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Our text is introduced by the vague remark that after completing his instruction to his group of followers, Jesus went on a teaching and preaching tour to various cities (verse 11). The criticisms of Jesus which Matthew records in this eleventh chapter evidently came after he had been preaching and healing for some time. "It was a matter of course that a Man of such depth, originality, unconventionality, energy and fearless independence would sooner or later provoke criticisms of all shades; from mild, honest doubt, to decided reprobation. By the time the events here related occurred, the reaction had fully set in, and the narrative shows how extensive it was, embracing within its sphere of influence the best in the land represented by the Baptist; the commercial class represented by three cities named; the professional class—the wise and understanding; and the zealots in religion."

Machærus, where John the Baptist was imprisoned, was a fortress by the Dead Sea.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

"The secret of learning is to ask much, to remember much, and to teach much." Do your pupils ask questions? Does your teaching lead them to ask questions? Do they come to you with their problems and perplexities? Does your attitude toward them invite personal conferences?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

OUR LORD'S TESTIMONY CONCERNING HIMSELF

Beginning the Lesson

Theologians write about "the self-consciousness of Jesus," meaning thereby his way of feeling and thinking about himself. Many passages will at once occur to your mind in which is expressed his consciousness that he is the final answer to the world's prayer for help, that he alone can meet the needs of a sin-stricken people, that he is the world's Savior. Bishop Matthew Simpson Hughes contrasts him with John the Baptist, the mighty prophet who was a forerunner and a herald, and knew himself as such, while Jesus Christ never in word or deed placed himself in such attitude. He always claimed to speak the final word of authority and to make the final offer of grace. Then Bishop Hughes briefly recalls some of the claims of Jesus:

"He proclaimed himself as the Light of the world. He set himself forth as the goal of the past, the authority of the present, the hope of the future. It is the mission of the Spirit of God to glorify him and to transform man into his own likeness. The time is to come when all the kingdoms of the earth are to be under his benign reign.

"He is Lord of heaven as well as earth. He fills eternity as well as time. In the last great scene all nations are to be gathered before him for judgment, and his people are to dwell with him forever. There is never a hint of anything but finality in his utterances. That is the atmosphere of the New Testament. He never catches a glimpse of another in the future. He is Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the ending, the same yesterday, today and forever."

Do We Look for Another?

For what shall we look? Great changes have come and gone and have left the moral and spiritual supremacy of Jesus Christ without successful challenge in the world. Still all characters fall by celestial diameters below that which he exhibited to mankind; still all ethical conceptions must be tested by his teaching and measured by his standards; still the world listens to him who spake as never man spake; still we search in vain for moral and spiritual territory untrodden by his feet; still we find no forces of righteousness and uplift equal to those which he revealed and made accessible to men. The days of religious prospecting are over because we have "the unsearchable riches of Christ."

Do we look for another? Where shall we look? There are some desperate needs in human life. Man is not what he ought to be. He does not do what he ought to do. Something has gone wrong in human nature. The Bible calls it sin. You may give it any name you please—the black, crippling, destructive fact remains.

Man needs some power that can grapple with the causes of his misery and crime and sin, and conquer. He needs something that can break the shackles of the past, pour cleansing streams through his present life, and fill the dark uncertainty of the future with golden hope. No one ever claims to do that work but the living Christ. Where is there another who can transform bad men into good men? Where is there another of whom men bear testimony that in the darkest hour, when hope was swallowed up in despair and the soul was one great cry for help, he brought peace and power? It still remains the final word: "There is none other name given under heaven, among men, whereby we can be saved."

Do we look for another? Why should we look? The credentials of Christ change only to increase. We add to the record, that John the Baptist received the higher spiritual evidences of Christ's power: the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are clean, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up; and the poor have still the rich gospel of comfort and grace. The heart once in prison and sorrow speaks from its freedom and consolation only to proclaim the final Saviorhood of Christ and to exclaim:

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
More than all in thee I find."—Matthew Simpson Hughes.

Believe Me for the very Works' Sake

This Youth comes down from the hill-village of Nazareth, moves among all classes of society, and treats them as having equal rights. He announces the golden axiom that as we would that men shall do to us, even so should we do to them, and he practices it. He goes about doing good, healing, comforting, feeding the hungry, visiting the sick, succoring the dying pariahs and wastrels of society; he earns the splendid reproach that he is the friend of publicans and sinners. He utters parable after parable, the aim of which is to teach kindliness and love; applauds the good Samaritan; rebukes Dives, pities Lazarus; pictures the Judgment-seat of God as the solemn tribunal where men are judged for their love of one another, or their lovelessness; himself dies forgiving his enemies, and breathing benediction on a thief who perishes with him. At the time, perhaps, not even his disciples comprehended the significance of these words and actions; but they were not forgotten. After a while they emerged into dazzling distinctiveness, and attracted the attention of the world. Men meditated over them, talked of them one to another, and at last strove to live in the same spirit. A company of men and women arose whose avowed object was to live as this Youth lived, and they began to overspread the world. And so the Church of Christ begins—a confederacy of men and women who love him, love one another, and love all men; the religion of humanity begins; pity, tenderness, and consideration soften the human heart; slavery dies out, gladiatorial combats cease; wealth is shared, poverty is cheerfully endured, labor becomes honorable, and the key-note of a new morality is struck, that it is more blessed to give than to receive—to minister than to be ministered unto. All this as the fruit of a single brief Life lived long ago in Palestine. All our liberties, rights, humanities, moralities as the direct result of a Life that perished on the cross! How will you judge that Life? What can you make of a story so splendid and so nearly incredible? Forget, if you please, all that theology has to say about this wondrous Youth of Nazareth; regard it as unthinkable if you must; still the works remain, and the divine challenge reaches us, "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works' sake."—W. J. Dawson, in The Divine Challenge.

Jesus Christ Reveals the Father

"No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." "Come unto Me, ye anxious, laden ones, and I will give you rest. To you shall that dark unknown be filled with the Father's face, and your anxiety shall be changed into assurance and peace." Have I succeeded in making the connection between these verses plain? The Savior seems to say, "If they only knew their father their anxiety would vanish like cloud-spots in the dawn. I know the Father—I will make him known to them! Come unto me, ye anxious ones, and by wondrous revelation I will give you rest." And so he seeks to turn weariness into rest by the unveiling of the Father. And in what strangely beautiful ways he made the Father known! He told them that to Providence there were no trifles, that God did not merely control great things, and allow smaller things to go by chance: "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." Nothing is overlooked;

all is full of thought and purpose. "Look at that sparrow," he said; "how very lightly you regard it: a cheap thing: two of them sold for a farthing: and yet your Father knows when a sparrow falls! Be not anxious! God is thinking about all things! If the world were moving irrationally, without controlling thought, then anxiety would be natural and pardonable. But all things are happening in the thought of God, and God is Love." That was the revelation the Savior made; and will any one say that if accepted, it would not end the anxiety of the world, and turn its mind-weariness into rest? To come to Jesus is to take his revelation of the Father, and to live in the inspiration of it, and such inspiration would turn fear into confidence, and confidence into peace. Think of it.—J. H. Jowett, in Apostolic Optimism.

The Rev. W. L. Ferguson, of Madras, points out the impossibility of accounting for the marked changes in disposition and character which are taking place on the mission field, apart from the working of God himself. I am continually led to wonder at the way in which these people become Christians. Most of them are so densely ignorant that they fail to follow anything like abstract thinking or philosophy. I have often been in despair when I have tried to reason out a case with them, and I am certain that if I were to attempt to teach them logic I should utterly fail. And yet they grasp the gospel message—enough of it to make salvation available. The great essentials get a grip on their minds and hearts. They forsake idolatry and heathen practices, they believe in God; they receive Christ as Savior, believing that he died for their sins, arose again, and that he is now alive and able to save and to sympathize. This may be the full extent of their apprehension, but it works marvels in their lives. I have seen some real saints among them, men and women consistent and spiritual in life and mighty in prayer. Such transformations tell greatly in the communities where the lives are lived.—John R. Mott, in The Decisive Hour of Christian Missions.

No One Knoweth the Son, save the Father

There is an awesome breath of loneliness about the words, loneliness in the sense of isolation of experience from that of all the world of men about him. Alone of all his time he had entered into the secret counsels of God. He moved among the populace absorbed in high and holy dreams they could not as yet comprehend. He did indeed find love among men; but he was misunderstood even by love. This secret of the filial consciousness only the Father could know. He stood on the heights overlooking the landscape of God's designs, and no man stood with him. But herein lay his divine compensation: because he was sharing the vision of God, he became aware that he shared the companionship of God. He was alone, yet not alone, for the Father was with him. Of all the personal things that impinged on his life, there was no one who knew him, came so intimately near to him, in all that he inwardly aspired to be, and was, none who shared his secrets, as he felt God did. His soul was a citadel invaded, and perpetually occupied by the Divine Spirit. It was a holy fellowship, a mutual indwelling of Father and Son. It was reserved for Jesus of Nazareth alone to say, "I live, yet not I but God in me": my soul is flooded with the sense of a Being great enough to be God, intimate enough to be me.—J. A. Robertson, in The Spiritual Pilgrimage of Jesus.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Who Jesus is. The fact that Christianity is today a source of inspiration and blessing wherever it holds sway is the best modern proof that Jesus is the Christ. See Lectures III and II of Wm. F. McDowell's In the School of Christ.

2. We look for other philosophers, scientists, statesmen, workers in all departments of human thought and achievement, but not for another Savior.

3. Present-day claimants of divine power. The marvel that in our enlightened age men and women can claim divine power and obtain a following "faithful to the point of fanaticism."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Explain the reason given by Jesus for the use of parables, verses 11-17. 2. Have you ever been so preoccupied with other things that the truth you heard made no impression upon you? 3. How can we keep our minds receptive to God's truth?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
WHO JESUS IS

Beginning the Lesson

Why was John, the forerunner of Jesus, called the Baptist? Where did he preach? How did he look? What was his food in the wilderness? What was his message? How did he compare himself and Jesus? You remember how he told the Pharisees that "the ax lieth at the root of the trees": he thought of The Christ as One who would come to judge the wicked. "His fan is in hand," he had cried, "and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing-floor; and he will gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire." How eager John had been for the coming of the One whose way he was preparing! Then he saw Jesus going about doing good. Where was the ax with which he was to hew away all the false things that so irritated John? Jesus healed the sick. That was all very well, John probably thought, but when will he begin the work of separating the chaff from the wheat, the evil from the good? Then Herod put John in prison for telling him, Herod, of his evil doing. Surely now Jesus will use the ax to deprive Herod of his power, John must have thought. But no, Jesus continued his work of preaching and healing. John, you see, had thought that the Father had sent his Son into the world to condemn the world; he had not understood that Jesus was sent instead to save the world. John was so troubled that at last he sent his disciples to Jesus with a question: what was it?

(Continue with Explanations and Comments. See also Chapter XVIII of Robert F. Horton's Young Peoples' Life of Christ.)

Revealed unto Babes

The words of the last part of verse twenty-five stand above the entrance of the class room in the botanical garden of a university town in Central Germany. They tell us how God shows himself to be greatest in the things that are least, and have an obvious reference to the wonders that the science of botany discloses to us. Every little plant has its own special beauties, some of which, indeed, we can see with our naked eye if we are only careful to notice them, but others require the aid of the most powerful of microscopes to reveal. Have you ever looked at the center of a daisy? Many of you perhaps think that the familiar flower with its yellow center and ring of white petals is a single blossom, but the fact is that every separate part of that white fringe and yellow center is an individual flower. If you look at the yellow part with an ordinary magnifying glass, you will find that there are little cup-shaped flowers in great quantity scattered over it.

Jesus was fond of telling us how God loved the little things. Those little sparrows of which men thought so slightly that if one were to pay the price of four of them in the market-place he would have one thrown into the bargain: "Those little birds," said Jesus, "have their life-history known to the Father in heaven."

Then the life of Jesus is itself an illustration of the principle about which we are speaking. Men sought for God only among the great things of earth. They thought that when the Christ came he must come with pomp and glory of an earthly kind. But when Jesus came it was in the form of a little child—a baby, not only weak, but poor.

Greatness and riches and learning did not appear to Jesus to be passports into the Kingdom of God. His disciples did not understand this, neither did the multitude, and when women brought their little ones to him these men would fain have driven them back; but Jesus became the children's champion, and said that in a little child men could see what God would have them become.—Condensed from Great Mottoes with Great Lessons, by G. Currie Martin, quoted in Expositor's Treasury of Sermons.

Come unto Me

Mr. Moody was once giving Christ's invitation. "Come," he said, and with outstretched hands he repeated the word again and again, "Come, come, come." Then a baby in the front pew put out its arms to obey; the tone and the attitude were enough for the little one. Would that we could have heard Jesus speak those beautiful words which are our Golden Text today! His attitude when speaking them has been finely portrayed by a great Danish sculptor, Thorwaldsen. Have you seen a copy of his famous statue which represents the Savior standing with extended hands,

as he said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest?" The statue is in a church in Copenhagen. Once a great scholar was looking at the statue and seemed to be disappointed, when a little child said to him, "You must go close to it, sir. You must kneel down and look up into the face." The scholar was greatly touched by the tenderness in the face he saw as he obeyed the little child and knelt.

It is a very powerful as well as tender Savior who bids us come to him. What did "coming to Jesus" mean to those to whom the words were first spoken? First, as Phillips Brooks tells us, physical approach, the finding themselves where they could touch his hands and look into his face; and then obedience, the doing of what he wanted them to do and what would give him pleasure; and then talking about him, the confidential interchange of thought, so that their thinking changed and enlarged with his; and so, at last, likeness, the showing of his character, the coming themselves to be nearer to what he was.

In the same way we, too, may come to Jesus, for Jesus still lives and his words are meant for us. We cannot see his face, but we can know him through his words and deeds. And we can obey him, think his thoughts after him, and grow nearer into a character like his.

What is the remainder of that beautiful promise which Jesus made about giving rest? A minister (Mark Guy Pearse) preached one time upon these words, and after the service was over a member of his congregation came to him and said: "When I was a boy at home, I used to drive the oxen in my father's yoke, and the yoke was never made to balance, as you said. Father's yokes were always made heavier on the one side than on the other. Then, you see, he would put a weak bullock in alongside a strong bullock and the light end would come on the weak bullock, while the stronger one had the heavy part of it on his shoulder. That is why the yoke is easy and the burden is light—because the Lord's yoke is made after the same pattern and is upon his shoulder."

Who Is Jesus Christ?

Let us answer that question in the words of Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown:

"He is the Son of man, One who embodies in himself all the human excellencies, so that men may turn to him to find those characteristics which reveal humanity at its best. But more than that, he is the Son of God—One who so presented the divine character that he was the express image of God's person, One to whom men may look up in worship, One to whom men may pray, One who lives eternally, One capable of entering into personal relations with you and me, as he did with Peter and James and John when he walked with them in the streets of Jerusalem and in the lanes of Galilee."

Several years ago, a talented Jewess, who had been brought up in orthodox Judaism and then had drifted into the Ethical Society, began attending Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin's church in New York. Then one day she asked to speak with him. "I see it now," was her first remark. "What?" asked Dr. Coffin. "I see there is nothing that I can think of in the character of God that I do not see in Jesus Christ, and nothing that I need a God for that Jesus does not do for me." In telling of the conversation Dr. Coffin added: "To me that was the fullest and most satisfying description of what Jesus Christ is, arrived at by personal experience."

Sentence Sermons

What Christ does is the best answer as to who he is.—Alexander Maclaren.

In the face, in the life, in the death of Jesus Christ, I see God.—Alexander MacCall.

Here is the truth in a little creed,
Enough for all the roads we go:
In love is all the law we need,
In Christ is all the God we know.—Edwin Markham.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What is a parable? (Dictionary.) 2. How does a parable differ from a fable? (Dictionary.) 3. Describe the four kinds of hearers represented by the four kinds of soils. 4. Give an illustration of a hearer whose heart is like the wayside soil. 5. Like the places where there is not much earth. 6. Like the thorny ground. 7. Like the good ground. 8. In what connection did Jesus say that men are known by their fruit? 9. Have you ever lost truth through inattention? 10. How do you listen at church?

LESSON X—MARCH 9

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

GOLDEN TEXT: He that hath ears, let him hear. Matthew 13.9

LESSON Matthew 13.1-23 DEVOTIONAL READING Proverbs 3.13-18

MATTHEW 13.1 On that day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. 2 And there were gathered unto him great multitudes, so that he entered into a boat, and sat; and all the multitude stood on the beach. 3 And he spake to them many things in parables, saying, Behold, the sower went forth to sow; 4 and as he sowed, some *seeds* fell by the way side, and the birds came and devoured them: 5 and others fell upon the rocky places, where they had not much earth: and straightway they sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth: 6 and when the sun was risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. 7 And others fell upon the thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked them: 8 and others fell upon the good ground, and yielded fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 He that hath ears, let him hear.

18 Hear then ye the parable of the sower. 19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, *then* cometh the evil *one,* and snatcheth away that which hath been sown in his heart. This is he that was sown by the way side. 20 And he that was sown upon the rocky places, this is he that heareth the word, and straightway with joy receiveth it; 21 yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while; and when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway he stumbleth. 22 And he that was sown among the thorns, this is he that heareth the word; and the care of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. 23 And he that was sown upon the good ground, this is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; who verily beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

1. THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER, A STUDY IN SOILS, verses 1-9. One day so great a crowd gathered around Jesus on the shore of the Sea of Galilee that he entered a fishing boat. When far enough from the multitude to be free from their importunities, yet near enough to address them, he taught them many things in parables. The word *parable* is derived from the Greek *paraballein, para,* beside, and *ballein,* to throw, and means literally *to place side by side,* hence *to compare.* A parable is a short, fictitious narrative of something which might really occur in life or nature by means of which a moral is drawn. An excellent definition of a parable as used by Jesus has been given thus: "A narrative, fictitious, but agreeable to the laws and usages of human life, by which either the duties of men or the things of God, particularly the nature and history of God's Kingdom, are figuratively portrayed."

Within the view of Jesus as he spoke his parable of the Sower there may have been a sower at work in a cornfield which descended to the water's edge. Dean Stanley describes such a field: There was the trodden pathway running through the midst of it, with no fence or hedge to prevent the seed from falling here or there on either side of it or upon it; itself hard with the constant tramp of horse, mule, and human feet. There was the good rich soil; there was the rocky ground on the hillside protruding here and there through the cornfields; there were the large bushes of thorn—the *nabk,* the kind of which tradition says the crown of thorns was woven—springing up in the very midst of the waving wheat.

A sower was sowing seed, so runs the parable. He lived in a hamlet or village, as all farmers do now in Palestine, and went to the unfenced field afar off to sow his seed. Some of it fell on the beaten path which ran through the field and lay there on top of the hard surface till birds devoured it. Some of the seed fell on the hillside where the underlying rock came very near the surface: the soil there was shallow and the warmth of the rock made the seed spring up quickly and look very promising, but the roots of the plants could not strike deep down and avoid the heat of the sun, and therefore the plants quickly withered away. Plants from the seed that fell where seeds of thorns were plentiful were overshadowed and starved to death by the more rapidly growing thorns. Some seed there was that fell on good ground, where the soil was rich and deep and free from thorns, and it yielded thirty and sixty and even a hundredfold. He that hath ears, let him hear—thus Jesus ended his parable.

"Every seed has in it the germ of a miracle. We stumble over the miracles of Jesus and argue about them. Yet does anything much less wonderful happen when men throw the seed upon the earth, and find it springing up and bringing forth thirty, sixty, and an hundred fold? Much more frequent, of course! But much less wonderful? The beginnings are so small, the process is so secret and so mysterious. The results are so great. If a yearly experience had not made us familiar with it all, we should realize better than we do how wonderful it is, and how divine" (J. M. E. Ross).

II. THE QUESTION OF THE DISCIPLES AND JESUS' ANSWER, verses 11-17.

III. THE EXPLANATION OF THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER, A STUDY IN SOULS, verses 18-23. The seed is the word of God, Lk. 8.12. "The seed aptly stands for Christian truth, 'the word of the kingdom,' or 'Word of God,' because when implanted in the heart and conscience, it grows, develops, and brings forth spiritual fruit" (Dummelow).

Like the four kinds of soil are the four kinds of hearers of the word of God. There are those whose hearts are so hardened that they do not understand the message, they "do not take it in," even as the wayside soil will not take in the seed. (By "him that is sown by the wayside" is meant the attitude of the one who receives the word of God as the wayside receives the seed.)

You remember how on one occasion a man heard Jesus say, "And when they bring him before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities" (Lk. 12.11), and at once his mind recurred to the one thing that occupied it constantly, his quarrel with his brother; he could hear no more, and further words fell on a dead surface. As some one has said, "The ruling idea swooped down like a hungry bird and caught the good seed away, before it could find entry; and all he was eager to say was, 'Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me.'" The seed never got in.

"The path was not always hard; remember that. Once it was mellow like the rest of the field, but it had been trodden hard by much travel. Hearts are hardened by repeatedly hearing and not doing the truth. Says Ruskin, 'Every duty we omit obscures some truth we might have known.' This is what is meant by being 'gospel-hardened'" (George Henry Hubbard).

There are those who listen to the word and readily accept it, but their interest is short-lived; they are shallow and unstable, and when tribulation or persecution comes, they stumble, fall. "They are generally of the enthusiastic and excitable temperament, who when brought under strong religious influences 'run well' for a time but soon tire, and fall away." Such was the scribe of Matthew 8.19 who said, "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest," but Jesus told him he had not counted the cost.

Others there are who hold forth the promise of bearing fruit, but allow the thorns of other interests to choke their Christian life. They have a crowded mind. The seed enters and takes root, but it has to fight for life with other growths. Anxieties in regard to the things of the world, riches in which they put their trust, absorption in business and social duties and amusements, contend therewith.

"'Thorns' stand for any kind of weed that chokes out the desired crop. Corn is a weed if it grows in a wheat field. The blackberry is only a troublesome thorn if it springs up in the midst of a flower bed. So the most innocent occupations and even praiseworthy actions may become harmful if allowed to crowd vital truths from our lives. When our mind is so occupied with our toil that we cannot attend to God's truth, then our very diligence becomes a vice" (George Henry Hubbard).

There are perfect hearers of truth: the seed falls upon good ground. They are attentive and hear the word; they accept it and it sinks deep in their hearts; and it bears fruit in their lives, threefold, even one hundredfold.

"There is in every heart some capacity for reception, and the great central lesson and meaning of the parable is simply this, that it is in co-operation of the seed and the soil, of the grace of God and the will of man, that there lie all the possibilities of the harvest which in the individual is character and in society the Kingdom of God" (H. R. Gamble).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

He spake to them many things in parables, verse 3. The method of teaching by parables was not new. There are several good examples in the Old Testament (2 Samuel 12.1-14; 14; Isaiah 5.1-6; 28.24-28.) It was also known to the rabbis: for example, it was said of Rabbi Meir that a third part of his discourses was tradition, a third allegory, and a third parable. But Christ made the parable form so completely his own that few since his time have ventured to imitate him. Neither the apostles nor any of the Christian fathers (except Hermas) are known to us as authors of parables.—One Volume Commentary.

Others fell upon the thorns, verse 7. When the ground is fairly clear, or free from thorns, it is customary to scatter the seed upon it and then plough it in with the light oriental plough. When a field has been for a season out of cultivation it becomes covered with strong yellow and blue thistles, and another year of neglect brings up a plentiful spread of thorn bushes, which are used for making brooms, and supply fuel for the village oven.—G. M. Mackie.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The transition from the sultry, somber atmosphere of Chapter XII into the calm, clear air of Christ's parabolic wisdom would be as welcome to the evangelist as it is to us. Yet even here we do not altogether escape the shadow of unbelief or spiritual insusceptibility. We read of much good seed wasted, bad seed sown among good, fish of all sorts caught in the net. The adoption of the parabolic method of teaching, indeed, had its origin in part in disappointing experiences; truths misapprehended, actions misunderstood, compelling the Teacher to fall back on natural analogies for explanation and self-defense. All the Synoptists recognize the importance of this teaching by their formal manner of introducing the first of the group of seven parables contained in Matthew's collection. Matthew's way of massing matter of the same kind most effectually impresses us with the significance of this feature in Christ's ministry.

That Jesus spoke all the seven parables grouped together in this chapter at one time is not certain or even likely. In the corresponding section Mark gives only two of the seven (Sower and Mustard Seed). Luke has the Sower only. The Sower, the Tares, and the Drag Net, may have formed a single discourse, as very closely connected in structure and import. Perhaps we should rather say, had a place in the discourse from the boat, which seems to have been a review of the past ministry of Jesus, expressing chiefly disappointment with the result. Much besides parables would be spoken, the parables being employed to point the moral: much seed, little fruit, and yet a beginning made destined to grow; the situation to be viewed with patience and hope.—A. B. Bruce, in The Expositor's Greek Testament.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Jesus taught by parables for two reasons: one was because a story always attracts, because truth embodied in a tale is remembered when abstract truth is not, and the other was because it was a method which aroused thought. The Parable of the Sower seems simple to us, for with it we are given its interpretation but it proved too difficult for the disciples before the interpretation was given them. But their minds had labored over it and therefore its lessons when explained made a lasting impression upon them.

Jesus' hearers were active, not passive listeners. He always set their minds at work. What one thinks out for oneself is never forgotten: the exercise of one's mind makes it one's own. Are you teaching in the way that Jesus did? Are your pupils active listeners? Do you use stories and questions which make them think? Do you tell them what you want them to know, or do you lead them to give expression to the truth you are seeking to impress? Do you teach them, or do you make them teach themselves?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

TAKE HEED HOW YE HEAR

Beginning the Lesson

Begin with the Historical Background and follow with Explanations and Comments.

What Are Ears For?

In The House of Martha, Frank R. Stockton thus philosophizes:

"During my lovely walks and rides through the country about our village, I began to cogitate upon the present social value of the human ear. Why do people in society and in domestic circles have ears? I asked myself. They do not use them to listen to one another. And then I thought and pondered further, and suddenly the truth came to me; the ears are merely agents of the tongue, who watch for breaks in the speech of others, in order that their principal may rush in and hold the field."

I am sure you all, at one time or another, have been guilty of apparently listening to another's words without in reality hearing them. Your ears were not closed, your organs of hearing were in good condition, the words were promptly carried by the nerves to your brain, but your mind did not take cognizance of them, did not heed them, because your thoughts were engaged upon something else. Our hearing is not an involuntary process; it is directly controlled by our wills and is subject to direct training. By taking heed how we hear we can increase our power to hear.

If Stockton had asked himself, Why do people in church have ears? what do you think would have been his subtle answer?

In Jonathan Edwards' time a revival of religion was termed "an attention to religion": such a revival is always needed. William M. Taylor quotes from Tennyson's Northern Farmer, who said about the parson's sermon—

> "And I always come to his church, before my Sally were dead,
> And heard him a-bumming away like a buzzard-cock over my head;
> And I never knew what he meant, but I thought he had something to say,
> And I thought he said what he ought to have said, and I came away"—

and adds: "The hearer should stir up his attention when he enters the place of worship, by pausing a little to ask himself why he is there, and to lift up his heart in prayer to God, for the open ear to hear, and the open heart to receive the message which his Lord has prepared for him."

The Whole Parable is for You

Do we not almost invariably think of this picture as representing four distinct persons or classes of persons? And does it not follow in our thinking that only one section of the parable can possibly apply to ourselves? And so we throw away three-fourths of it as having nothing for us. Fortunate if we keep even one-fourth!

Ah, take heed how ye hear! Thou art the man. Have you never lost truths through inattention, or unwillingness, or want of obedience?

Who is the rocky ground hearer? Thou art the man. Is not your life oftentimes preoccupied with other things, so that the truth you hear is choked before it comes to vintage? Do you never allow business or study or pleasure or politics to fill the place in your heart that ought to be kept clear for the cultivation of character and the direct service of love?

Who receives the seed in the good ground? Again, thou art the man, if thou dost choose. For such receiving is in the power of every hearer. You can attend. You can treat the truth with candor. You can obey it and so you can make it fruitful in your life.—George Henry Hubbard, in The Teaching of Jesus in Parables.

Three Kinds of Unfruitful Hearers

The unfruitful hearers described are of three classes:—the first hear, but heed nothing; the second heed, but resolve nothing; the third resolve, but persist not. The first receive a hindrance at the outset; the second after the seed has germinated; the third after it is well grown. In the first case the seed does not spring at all; in the second it springs, but dies before it grows up; in the third it grows up, but does not ripen.—Lyman Abbott.

Listening is a Fine Art

When Sir Edward Elgar composes he does not sit down in a fury and dash off a masterpiece in the intervals of wildly combing his hair with his fingers. He gets right away from crowds and cities, to the quietest and most lonely places he knows, and there he holds himself still and listens.

That is how his great oratorios have come to him. He says he does not invent them. He receives them. His sensitive ears gather them in the solitude. The whole

universe, he says, is full of music. It is there for all, free to any who have the capacity to hear it. Each may have what he requires of the exquisite harmonies of the universe. Thus does he conceive his task. It is his high privilege not to create the music, but to quietly receive and then transmit it to others. It was in this way that "The Dream of Gerontius" and "The Apostles" came to him.

Listening of this enriching type is a rare secret. It presupposes much discipline. It requires a highly-trained ear and certain attitudes of heart and mind that put the listener in tune with those hidden harmonies of the universe. In these matters everything depends on the quality of the listening.

Musically, numbers of people are living below their possibilities, for the simple reason that they have never learned how to listen. The world of music is closed or almost closed to them, because there has been no instruction or discipline in the art of listening.

Dr. Walford Davies speaks of the sleeping ear, the moving ear, the marching ear, the flying ear, the restful ear.

Some ears seem to be more musical than others. Some are more exquisitely sensitive to the available harmonies. But that seems to be as much a matter of training as of endowment. Almost every one has musical capacity, but for the most part it goes untrained and uneducated. Whilst a few hear masterpieces, the majority hear nothing at all.

It is even thus with the spiritual world. To some it is the supreme reality filled with exquisite harmonies. To others it appears not to exist at all. Some doubt, if they do not deny, its reality. They seem to live and move and have their being in a world of material things.

That some do not hear does not invalidate the experience of those who do hear. If another receives nothing in the solitudes where Elgar receives masterpices, the presumption is not the unreality of the music but the incapacity of the hearer.

That one wireless set gets no messages in no way proves there is nothing in wireless. A wise owner examines the receiver rather than denies the message.

Because Darwin had no ear for poetry, we do not deny the fact of poetry. Wise men do not on that account burn Browning and Keats and Shelley and Milton.

Because a scientist here and there has been unable to appreciate anything in a great art gallery except the picture frames, we do not, therefore, conclude that there is nothing in art.

Because Mr. Arnold Bennett finds nothing in religion—feels no need of worship or of prayer—we do not burn our hymn books or tear up our Bibles or pull down our churches. His religious incapacity does not at all invalidate the experiences of St. Francis, of Bunyan, of Wesley, or even of the humblest believer. In this realm, also, what men receive depends upon what they bring and finally upon what they are.

Listening here is also an art—a fine art. It makes big demands. Its conditions are moral and emotional no less than intellectual. Listening to be of any use must be an attitude of the whole man. Where men have listened in that great way, they have heard great things. Before any age can have prophets it must have listeners. Only thus does any man come to say: "The word of the Lord came unto me, saying." It is great listening that makes prophets.—F. C. Hogarth, in The New Outlook.

A Good Listener a Help to a Speaker

"Some listeners are eloquent. Their manifest appreciation inspires others to attention and interest. How often the intense enthusiasm of children at an entertainment is a great part of the entertainment to others! Their wide-open eyes make a story thrilling after it has been thrice told. Even so there is a listening for older ones which is a re-enforcement of the speaking. One can so enter into a sermon as to take part in the preaching of it. One can so grasp a Bible lesson as to share in teaching it. We hear a great deal in these days about the atmosphere of a church or a school. Let us understand that this atmosphere is what the physicist would call the resultant of two forces. One of those is the force of him who speaks, the other is the force of those who listen. And more of us are responsible for being good listeners than for being good speakers."

Listening to God

A friend of mine told me that he called one day upon a brother clergyman who had been ill in bed for six months. He said to this man: "I suspect that God

Almighty had a good many things to say to you, but you were too busy to listen, and so he had to put you on your back, that you might be able to give him time."

When he was going out the thought struck him: "I, too, am a busy man, and God Almighty may have to put me on my back, that he may tell me all he wishes."

So he resolved that each night he would sit quietly in his study, not reading, not writing, but opening his heart, that God's Spirit might impress upon him what he designed to teach, and criticize the life of the previous day.—F. B. Meyer.

Dull of Hearing

I am not half so much concerned over the faults of which I am aware, or over the spiritual losses which I know I incur every day—I can take care of those in time, being aware of them—as I am over the faults of which I am not aware, over the spiritual losses which I incur without knowing that I am incurring them. The fact that I hear voices to which I do not respond is not so great a thing to me as the fact that there must be voices just beyond those, that I do not hear and that I might hear if only my ear were keen to catch them.—Robert E. Speer.

For Bible Class Discussion

The great peril of the church-goer. How the pew can help the pulpit.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What is the difference between the parables of the tares and the net? 2. What is the difference between the parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl? 3. How many adherents to the Kingdom of Heaven were there when these parables were spoken? 4. Is the prophecy of the Parable of the Mustard Seed coming true? 5. Which parable shows the method by which the Kingdom is to be extended? 6. In what various ways is the leavening influence of Christianity working in the world? 7. What do these parables teach as to the meaning of the term "The Kingdom of Heaven"?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

GIVING HEED TO JESUS' TEACHING

Beginning the Lesson

An examination upon the New Testament was recently held in one of our great New England colleges. The one who held the test declared it showed that a great number of men in college were "religious illiterates": what did he mean? He found the ignorance of so many in the fundamental teachings of the Gospels most dismal; many had no idea of what were "the two great commandments," many had no grasp of what Jesus meant by "the Kingdom of Heaven," and many could not tell what is the nature of a parable. Now I am sure that you are not "religious illiterates"; let me test you upon the nature of a parable. What is a parable? (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

Hardened Soil

The Mariposa Grove of great sequoias in California is visited annually by thousands of tourists, in whom those giant trees awaken wonder and awe. Grizzly Giant, a tree 4,000 years old, was a marvel of vitality when the grove was made a National Park and tourists first began to come. Soon signs of decay began to appear in the tree. Forestry experts studied the trouble. They found that the trampling of the tourists had so hardened the ground about it that the warmth of the sun and the moisture of the rain could not penetrate it. The experts had the ground ploughed up and a fence put about the tree. The signs of decay soon disappeared, and now this mighty monarch of the forest is as full of strength and vitality as ever.

What was a near tragedy for Grizzly Giant has become a real tragedy for many persons. Their hearts have become so hardened that the seed which is God's word cannot gain an entrance.

A Mohammedan was in the habit of coming to a missionary's home two or three times a week to compare the Bible and the Koran. Suddenly he stopped coming, and his friend sought him out and asked the reason. "The last time I was with you," he explained, "I felt that if I came again I should be convinced of the truth of Christianity and would have to become a Christian, so I resolved not to come till my heart was steeled to your proofs." He kept his resolve, and the seed could not get in.

One whose heart had become hardened through sin is thus described by Dr. Watkinson, in Lessons of Prosperity: "I saw a string of prisoners on their way to the county jail. One of the prisoners was a young girl on her way for the first time to prison; the tears were in her eyes; she seemed overcome with shame and sorrow; there might be no doubt about her guilt, there could be none about her shamefacedness and grief. But another prisoner, an old woman, showed no sign of shame or sorrow; she laughed heartily, smoked her pipe, danced a little jig, told the bystanders that she was going to her hotel, told how many times she had already been there, and so ran on with no end of jokes and oaths and laughter. The hoary sinner had once been the child at the other end of the chain, striving to hide her face and her tears, but habitual sin had done its work, and the withered criminal could no longer blush."

Pliable and Christian

Early in the Pilgrim's Progress, Pliable is seen setting out for heaven in company with Christian. They hasten together over the forlorn fields which border the City of Destruction; Christian impeded by the burden on his back, Pliable stepping out more lightly. They converse of the prospect which, so they are assured, awaits them if they reach the far end of the narrow way; the gold gate, the white robes, the angelic company, the face of the King. Then on a sudden, heedless of the ground, they both stumble into the Slough of Despond, and struggle miserably in the mire. Both at length climb out onto dry land; but on opposite sides. Christian lands on the farther bank, and plods on towards the wicket gate. Pliable scrambles out, wet and drenched, with his back to heaven and his face to the City of Destruction, and leaves Christian, with an angry farewell, "to possess the brave country alone for him."

Pliable had no root in himself. He endured for a while. Christian had root, Christian was convinced of sin. For him, his perseverance was a matter of life or death. Pliable showed no sign of real disturbance of soul. He was pleasurably attracted by the prospect of a radiant future, and he liked, in respect of human sympathy, to be in company with one who was setting out in great earnest towards it. But he had no root in himself. His own conscience had never been awakened.—Archdeacon Moule.

What to Do with the Thorny Ground

Weeds have the most surprising way of getting in where they are not expected. They come into backyards and gardens. They come into the hearts of people—the weeds of ugly thoughts, blown by the winds of gossip; the weeds of evil habits suggested we hardly know how; and they fall so silently that at first we do not know they have come. It is amazing how quickly they grow. If we do not watch them, presently they have taken possession of everything, and what we thought was a garden is all a tangle of rank things. The flowers of the good thoughts within us are crowded out by the weeds of the thoughts which are selfish and mean.

There are two things which we must do if we would keep the weeds down. The first is that we must never let our gardens nor ever let our hearts go for a long time unwatched. If people go away from their grass-plots and their flower-beds for weeks and months, the weeds will certainly be there when they return. And if we pay no attention to our hearts, and never let Conscience, like a good gardener, walk up and down, the weeds will certainly grow there.

And then we must remember that the way to conquer weeds is to encourage flowers. The way to kill evil habits is to take good care of the positive good habits. We must tend them and strengthen them and make the soil rich for their roots to grow in. We must keep planting and replanting the things of God, so that they will be too strong ever to be crowded out.—W. Russell Bowie.

Take Heed how You Hear

"That was the dullest sermon I ever listened to!" exclaimed Sam on Sunday after he came home from church.

"Yes, I thought so myself," replied Grandpa with a twinkle in his eye.

"Did you, Grandpa?" inquired Sam, glad to have someone to stand by him.

"I mean that I thought you considered it so," replied his grandfather. "I enjoyed it, because my appetite was whetted for it before I went to church. I noticed it was just the other way with you."

"Just the other way!" cried Sam; "how was that?"

"Why, before you went," answered his grandfather, "instead of sharpening your appetite for the sermon, you dulled it by reading that trashy paper. Then after you were in the building, instead of sitting straight up and looking at the minister while he preached, as though you wanted to catch every word he said and every expression of his face, you lounged down in your seat and turned half-way around. I never knew anybody who could hear a sermon right from the side of his head. Then you let your eyes rove about the church and out of the window. That dulled the sense. You dulled your ears by listening to a dog that was barking and an automobile that was passing. You dulled your mind and soul by thinking that you were a terribly abused boy for having to go to church and stay through the sermon, and you made yourself a dull listener. I never knew it to fail in my life that a dull listener made a dull sermon."—F. W. Farrar.

How to Hear

I hold in my hand two bottles, as you can easily see; and we will undertake to fill them with water from this pitcher. This one I fill very easily. There is no trouble about it at all. Now we will try the other. I have poured out plenty of water; let us see if the bottle is full. No, there's nothing in it. What is the trouble? The water was perfectly willing to go into this bottle; it had no prejudice against this as compared with the other. This bottle, too, is a larger one and there's more room in it to hold the water than there is in that; and yet that one I filled easily and this one I didn't get a drop into.

Let me try once more. We will hold them up together side by side so that the same pouring will cover the mouth of each bottle. Now let us see how they have fared. The little one, again, is full of water. Let us see the other. There's nothing in it at all, is there?

"It has a cork in it." Oh, yes. That explains it. This one had a cork in all the while! We will just take the cork out and see if there's any trouble about filling it. Now see! I have it full and overflowing.

The only difference, then, in the two cases was that one bottle had a stopper in it and the other one was without a stopper; and the water couldn't go in to fill the bottle that had its mouth closed; that is to say, that had the stopper in.

Even the great and good God cannot give a blessing to anyone who closes his eyes and his ears and his heart against him. We may go to church with our hearts shut up. We may even pray with stoppers in! And then we get no blessing. The water pours from the fountain freely. God is eager to give us rich gifts! But it is only the hungry-hearted who are filled.—Condensed from Little Ten-Minutes, by Frank T. Bayley.

Begin Now to Hear Aright

It is in the spring that the farmers open up the soil and put the seed into the ground. It wouldn't do for them to wait till the very warm weather came to plant their seeds. If they did, they could not expect a heavy crop at the time of harvest. Jesus tells us that the seed he wants us to sow is the Word of God, and the ground where we sow it is in our heart. He means that we are to read about him, and learn what he says, and then we are to obey him, to do what he did, and to be like him. But he says we must begin now if we are to have a full crop at harvest.—Robert Harvie.

Sentence Sermons

God often would enrich, but finds not where to place
His treasures;—nor in hand nor heart a vacant space.—R. G. Trench.

Wise words in dull ears are but lifeless lore.—Goethe.

The Word must be sown in the heart like seed;
Men's hands just tend it, their lives defend it,
Till it burst into flower as a deathless deed.—John Boyle O'Reilly.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Which chapter of Matthew is called the "parable chapter"? 2. Why did Jesus speak in parables? 3. What are the parables called in the title of our lesson? 4. Which parable shows the power of the Kingdom to change the character of one who receives it? 5. Which parable teaches that the Kingdom may seem little in its beginning, but it proves great in its power for service?

PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM

GOLDEN TEXT: The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Romans 14.17

LESSON Matthew 13.24-52 DEVOTIONAL READING Proverbs 3.19-26

MATTHEW 13.31 Another parable set he before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: 32 which indeed is less than all seeds; but when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the heaven come and lodge in the branches thereof.

33 Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened.

44 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in the field; which a man found, and hid; and in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls; 46 and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: 48 which, when it was filled, they drew up on the beach; and they sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but the bad they cast away. 49 So shall it be in the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous, 50 and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

51 Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea. 52 And he said unto them, Therefore every scribe who hath been made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND THE TARES, verses 24-30. When Mark Twain was a lad he was sent by his mother to weed a flower-bed. He found more weeds than flowers and came back to ask his mother if instead of weeding the flower-bed he might not "flower the weed-bed." This parable is a warning against the danger of flowering a weed-bed.

II. THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED, verses 31, 32. In this parable Jesus likens the Kingdom of Heaven to a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. The mustard seed was the smallest seed cultivated by the Jews and was popularly regarded as the smallest of all seeds. Although the seed is so small, mustard sometimes grows to a height of ten or twelve feet, and then the birds of the heavens come and lodge in the branches thereof. The parable teaches that the growth of the Kingdom is sure, that from a small beginning great results follow. The husbandman does his part in preparing the ground and sowing the seed, and then he leaves it in the care of the earth, depending upon it together with the action of the sun and air and rain to carry the germinating life through the stages of its growth. So man must trust to a Power that lies beyond him for results, for the extension of the Kingdom of God in the hearts of men depends not upon the agency of man alone but upon the power of God.

> "Wondrous Man . . . You had your dreams:
> That John and Peter, James and Magdalene—
> Dark Judas, too—should learn to know your God.
> You had the faith to hail the Kingdom's gleams
> In earth's embattled realm; and still your hope
> Is undismayed, though men in darkness grope"
> (Thomas Curtis Clark).

III. THE PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN, verse 33. In a third parable Jesus compared the Kingdom of Heaven to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened. Leaven is yeast. The word *leaven* is derived from the French *levare,* to raise; it means anything that causes fermentation, especially a portion of fermenting dough. Three measures, nearly four and a half pecks, was the usual amount for one baking, Genesis 18.6. When I saw the large quantity of dough which was ready for baking at the Girls' Orphan School in

Nazareth, I inquired if that were the usual amount, and the answer was, "O yes, three measures."

In the interpretation of the parables, leaven stands for the influence of Christ: the Christian spirit works in the hearts of men as rapidly and thoroughly, as it were, as yeast in dough. "How the two parables of the mustard seed and the leaven supplement each other! The first brings out the progress achieved by the visible and organized efforts of men for the advancement of the Kingdom. Then, lest men might feel that nothing was being accomplished where no such visible organized efforts were in evidence, Jesus hung before them the picture of the leaven. The yeast hidden in the meal did its work out of sight in an unorganized way. It illustrates the permeative power of the truth, the results achieved by subtle communication where one soul influences another, it scarce knows how" (Charles R. Brown).

"Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" wrote Paul to the Corinthians. Each particle of leaven affects the particles next to it, these the next, and so on until the whole mass has been permeated with the fermenting power, and the heavy lumps of dough have become changed into light loaves of bread ready for baking. Christianity is a power like that leaven. Working slowly and quietly, it transforms every part of man's moral nature, every capacity of his, till the entire man—spirit, soul and body—is transformed. And the leaven will not cease working till the whole world is leavened by it.

IV. MANY PARABLES SPOKEN, verses 34, 35.

V. THE EXPLANATION OF THE PARABLE OF THE TARES, verses 36-43.

VI. THE PARABLE OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE, verse 44. In this parable Jesus likens the Kingdom of Heaven to a treasure hidden in the field which a man finds and in his joy hides again till he can sell all that he has and buy the field. In the time of Jesus there were no banks in Judea, and it was not uncommon for men to bury their money or treasures. It might chance, also, that a man died without having revealed the fact to anyone else, and years afterwards someone would come upon the treasure accidentally. In the interpretation of the parable, the selling and buying mean that the finder gives up everything which prevents his whole-hearted enjoyment of the greatest of treasures, the Kingdom of Heaven. The parable might more aptly be called the Treasure Finder.

"The religion that costs nothing, that demands no sacrifice of other things, that does not lift the life out of low-level motives, is worth little and makes little difference to the life" (Rufus M. Jones).

VII. THE PARABLE OF THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE, verses 45, 46. In this parable Jesus compares the Kingdom to a pearl merchant's seeking and finding of a pearl so valuable that he sold all he had to possess it. Two thousand years ago the diamond was not the object of admiration which it now is; rather was that place given to the pearl. Shall we call this parable the Parable of the Pearl Merchant? The lesson of this parable differs from that of the former in that the prize, instead of being found as a surprise, is found only after diligent seeking. "It was natural for a Jewish teacher to give two illustrations of the same truth, since the more elevated Hebrew style tends always to parallelisms" (John A. Broadus).

Some one has said that entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven is looked upon by many as entrance into a fortified town is viewed by the rural population; it may be necessary in time of danger, but they think with longing of the fields and homesteads they must abandon, and it is with constraint, not from desire, that they make the change. Rather is membership in the Kingdom of such supreme importance that one should willingly sacrifice everything for its sake. Have we the merchant's eagerness to seek and find this pearl of great price? "Do you expect that religion is so cheap that without giving time you can find close fellowship with God?" questions Andrew Murray. "You cannot; this pearl is worth everything."

VIII. THE PARABLE OF THE NET, verses 47-50. This parable is a companion one to that of the Tares, with the difference that in the latter the emphasis is upon what should be done in this life, while here it is upon what will be done in the

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Eugène Burnand

THE LEAVEN

future life. In the Parable of the Tares the danger of attempting now to separate the good from the evil is emphasized; in the Parable of the Net it is made clear that this separation will be effected by and by. Possibly Matthew narrated this parable last in order to close the series with the picture of the judgment. The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a net, which was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind. "This was an oblong net of immense length, employed near the shore. The bottom edge was weighted with lead, and swept the bottom of the sea. The upper edge floated on the surface of the sea, supported by corks. Escape from it was impossible, and when it was dragged to shore, it contained every fish in the area of the sea which it had swept." On the beach the fishermen sat down and sorted the catch, putting what was good for food into receptacles and throwing the worthless away.

The Parable of the Net looks forward to the consummation that is coming for the Kingdom of God. Today there is the casting of the net, the catching of souls for the Kingdom; the time is coming when the false members of the Kingdom will be separated from the true, the wicked from the righteous, and to the wicked punishment will be meted out.

IX. THE APPLICATION OF THESE PARABLES TO THE DISCIPLES, verses 51, 52. Very readily the disciples answered "Yea" to Jesus' question if they had understood his parables. "How Jesus must have smiled, inwardly if not outwardly, at their simplicity," some one comments. "They had learned the alphabet and were trying to pronounce words of one syllable in the language of the Kingdom. But the deeper meaning and richer content of that life abundant and eternal to which he would introduce them lay ahead as an undiscovered country." "Therefore since you have understood, as you say," continued Jesus, "you will have no difficulty in understanding this, that every scribe who hath been made a disciple to the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." The Jewish scribes taught only things old, the Law and the Prophets; the Christian scribe (Christ's disciples) added to this the teaching of things new which they had learned from their Rabbi, Christ.

"The Kingdom of Heaven is here personified. It is viewed as the teacher, and, just as young men who desired to be scribes resorted to the Scribal College, and sat at the feet of the rabbis, so the Christian scribe must go to school to the Kingdom of Heaven, and receive its instruction. And this means that he must sit at Jesus' feet (compare Luke 10), learn his method, and catch his spirit. Jesus had begun to teach by parables. It was a new method with him, but it was by no means original. It had been much employed by the ancient prophets, and the rabbis were very fond of it. But Jesus' teaching hitherto had been absolutely unique, amazing all who had heard it, and impressing them with a sense of its authority (Mt. 7.28, 29). And there was this danger in the teaching by parable that the familiarity of the method might conceal the originality of the message. Jesus knew what his disciples were thinking when he inquired, 'Have ye taken in all these things?' 'Yes,' they replied, their glibness betraying how imperfectly they had comprehended what they had heard. On this account he said, 'Every scribe that hath been made a disciple of the Kingdom of Heaven is like a householder who bringeth forth from his store things new and old'" (David Smith).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Leaven, verse 33. The careful oriental housewife always saves a portion of the sour dough (the German word for leaven is *sauerteig, sour dough*) from each baking, to use in the next, for she does not have our convenient cakes of yeast.

Three measures of meal, verse 33. It cannot be doubted that the three measures of meal amounted to more than our English bushel in quantity. To us this would appear as more than what a large family would use at one baking; but the conditions of ordinary Palestine life do not render it at all unusual. Accustomed as we are to a great variety of food, including an abundance of meat, we use bread more as an accompaniment to, than as the chief article of, a meal. But in our Savior's time, as well as now, the main food of the people was fermented milk, cheese, olives and oil, figs, raisins, and bread. It will be seen by this that bread is literally the staff of life with them, to which all else is subsidiary, and therefore that the statement of the parable simply conforms to the familiar facts of the household economy in that land.—W. H. Thomson, in The Parables by the Lake.

Shall cast them into the furnace of fire, verse 50. Sir Francis Younghusband, writing about Tibet, says that an interesting detail of the religion of the natives is that their hell is not hot, but cold, for if it were hot the inhabitants of frozen Tibet would all wish to flock there.

Who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old, verse 52. The scribes and rabbis of Christ's day were singularly lacking in imagination. Hence they could bring forth out of their treasure lore things old, but nothing new, fresh, stimulating. "Rabbi Jehudah said," "Beth Hillel decreed," "It is written," and so on, through weary disquisition and endless verbal quibblings of ancient teachers. Jesus, on the contrary, was rich in imagination, without which no teacher can bring forth things new.—Edward B. Pollard, in Biblical World.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Thirteenth Chapter of Matthew is called "The Parable Chapter." It contains seven parables. The first two, those of the Sower (our lesson last week) and the Tares, were spoken from the boat to the crowd on the shore. The explanation of the parables was given to the disciples upon their return to the house, probably in Capernaum. The next two, the parables of the Mustard Seed and of the Leaven, were, according to Luke's account in 13.10, 18-21, seemingly spoken in the synagogue. Whether the other three, the parables of the Hidden Treasure, the Pearl of Great Price, and the Net were given at this time, or were narrated with the others in Matthew's customary way of grouping, cannot be known.

All these "Kingdom Parables" illustrate the value, or appraise the character, of the Kingdom of Heaven. They must have given great encouragement to the disciples, who doubtless compared the small number of the children of the Kingdom with their Master's expectation in regard to it, and wondered how so great a result could come from so small a beginning. And Jesus must have felt keenly their lack of comprehension of his plans and purposes, and by these parables endeavored to enlighten as well as encourage them.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

The teacher who is a disciple of the Kingdom of Heaven is like the householder who brings forth out of his treasures things new and old. He must be always discovering new truth in order to teach the old truth convincingly. He must be always studying and reading and thinking about old texts in order to teach them interestingly and purposefully, for old texts not revisioned, rethought, tend to become stereotyped in their presentation. Old truths cannot be imparted in a fresh and vital way, unless new knowledge is constantly being gained. The true teacher realizes that he must be ever attaining a larger truth about Christ, and a deeper realization of God, or his old knowledge and old grasp of divine truths will lose their power.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

WHAT CHRISTIANITY MEANS FOR THE WORLD

Beginning the Lesson

What is "The Kingdom of Heaven"? Jesus nowhere really defines it. "A definition is a wall we build around a word to get its meaning within some understandable space, and walls have their limitations. The greatest things cannot thus be shut in. You may fence a piece of ground, but never the winds which blow across it, nor the drifting shadows of the clouds above it. No more can you fence the Kingdom of Heaven with a definition."

In Jesus Christ and the Social Question, Dr. Francis G. Peabody has a helpful discussion of this term, "'Jesus,' begins the Gospel of Mark, 'came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God and saying, "The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand.'" The Kingdom was the one end to be desired; it was the pearl of great price for which all else might be sold; it was the piece of money to find which the house was diligently swept; it was to be the theme of daily prayer for the followers of Jesus: 'Thy Kingdom come.' It is a phrase which, on the face of the record, is often obscure, and which in different passages appears to have incon-

sistent meanings. The Kingdom is described as both a present and a future state, as both an inward and an outward condition. Now it seems to be a remote and glorious consummation of the Messiah's reign in the day of the last things: 'Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth . . . see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.' Again, it is obviously not remote and supramundane, but near and of this world: 'There be some here of them that stand by, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Kingdom of God come with power.' Yet again, it is a silent, spiritual, imminent presence: 'The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, There! for lo, the Kingdom of God is within you.'

"We are brought to the conclusion that the Kingdom of God had to Jesus both significances, that of a future and that of a present state, that of a heavenly and that of an earthly society. Jesus views the world from above. He sees in it the movement of the life of God on the souls of men. Wherever, then, this Spirit of God finds welcome in a human life, there, immediately, unostentatiously yet certainly, the Kingdom of God has already come; and when at last that same Spirit shall penetrate the whole world, then there will result a social future which language itself is hardly rich enough to describe. This is no inconsistency or confusion of thought. The thought of Jesus considers both what is and what is to be; the present potentiality of the Kingdom and its future realization. Here is the significance of the parables of the Leaven and of the Mustard Seed. The Kingdom has as its very essence the capacity for expansion."

The Parables of the Kingdom of Heaven

The parables of this thirteenth chapter of Matthew are analogies. The Kingdom of Heaven is the field with its various soils in which the seed is planted, the seed which is sown with the tares, the leaven which transforms the mass with which it comes in contact, the treasure hid in the field to possess which the finder sells all that he has, the pearl of great price which the seeker buys at the expense of all he possesses. "The best is a light or a lure, an outer excellence or an inner perfection, in whose quest a man may spend himself utterly and in whose possession all his dreams come true."

What is the distinctive teaching of the Parable of the Mustard Seed? How large a beginning had the Kingdom of Heaven at the time the parable was spoken? The One Volume Commentary traces its growth thus: "Insignificant in its beginnings, founded by a supposed criminal in an obscure province, directed by twelve Galileans of little wealth or education, the Christian movement rapidly expanded into a world-wide Church, so powerful as a bond of union that the Roman Empire sought to strengthen itself by its alliance, so strong to succor the oppressed that the poor and lowly took refuge under its protection, so majestic in its ordered stability that the rude barbarians who conquered Rome submitted to its sway. Its growth in modern times has been still more striking. From the year 1700 to 1800 it is estimated that the Christian population of the globe advanced from one hundred and fifty-five millions to two hundred millions. From 1800 to 1900 the progress has been from two hundred millions to more than five hundred millions, so that the disciples of Christ now equal, if they do not exceed, a third of the human race."

The Price of the Kingdom of Heaven

And the price of the Kingdom of God? Just what Jesus said—all that a man has. Christianity has always asked everything a man has. It asked of the handful of Jews who first followed Jesus the willingness to be separated from their people and forego their pride. It asked of Greeks and Romans, who made the cross their sign, the willingness, at a cost which we shall never understand, to disentangle themselves from a pagan life which met and seduced them at every step they made. It asked of our fathers' fathers in northern forests new reverences, new obediences, new goodnesses.

Today the Kingdom of God is asking us to apply its principles to the conduct of our common life, to make its spirit regnant in politics and in business, to test our convictions and our inheritances by its tests, and to subdue every region of our lives to its imperial concern.

Aye, the best has its price, but the best is worth its price.

We may buy knowledge with study, and strength with labor, and tenderness with

tears, and high happiness with laughter. We may bring away goodness from much wrestling with evil things. The passing years leave behind them a deposit of rich experience. Love gains added love, and loyalties are paid for in a splendor of holy causes greatly served and a wealth of soul whose glory, like the glory of pictured windows only dimly guessed from without, is their enduring treasure who conduct the commerce of their lives with the best. How superbly are they profited who, having spent all, have gained their own souls and in the gaining of them touched with a rarer glory the fellowships of which they are a part, and brought a little nearer the Master's purpose and the prophet's dream!—Gaius Glenn Atkins, in a Sermon.

Jesus Believed in the Law of Permeation

In reading the Gospels I am sometimes struck with how little Christ appears to have done for the spread of his Kingdom. "The Kingdom," as he conceived it, was undoubtedly a world-ideal. No one can read the words of Christ or study his temper without the clearest conviction that he meant his religion to be a world religion, and believed that there was in it a spiritual efficacy for the healing of all races and all peoples. And yet all that he did to give practical interpretation to these ideals was to gather round him a few peasants and fishermen, to create a beautiful memory of love and infinite compassion, to leave behind him a handful of wise and tender precepts and a perfect example.

Why did he think this enough? Because he believed in the law of permeation—the Kingdom of Heaven was like leaven. In our haste for immediate and rapid results this is a law which we are all apt to forget. There is only one sure way of changing human conduct—it is by changing human ideas. You can conquer men by the sword, but their souls remain unconquered, as every persecutor has discovered. You can impose what seems to be and really is beneficent legislation, but if the convictions of the people are not behind your legislation it will fail, and your laws will be evaded or defied. No statesman or reformer, however powerful, can outrun the ideas of his time. And therefore the only true path of reform is permeation, the growth of new ideas, which silently transform the attitude of men and change their conduct.—From a Sermon by W. J. Dawson.

Christianity's Leavening Influence in the World

Many of us take a huge interest in the institutions of our country, and are ready to lay our finger on this and that as needing reform. This parable should therefore haunt the ear, and always suggest the question: Is this or that institution radically bad? or, supposing good and wise men were working it, would it not serve a good purpose? What is wanted in the world is not new forms, but a new spirit in the present forms. His Spirit, he says, does not require a new channel to be dug for it; its fuller stream may flood the old banks, may wear out corners here and there, may break out in new directions, but in the main, the channel remains the same.

This parable pointedly directs attention to the precise method by which the whole word is to be Christianized. Religion spreads not by contagion. God works through natural means; and the natural means here pointed at is personal influence. What, then, does the parable teach us regarding the operation of this influence? It teaches us, first, that there must be a mixing; that is to say, there must be contact of the closest kind between those who are and those who are not the subjects of Christ. Manifestly, no good is done by the leaven while it lies by itself; it might as well be chalk or anything else. It must be mixed with the flour. So must Christians be kneaded up together with all kinds of annoying and provoking and uncongenial people, that the spirit of Christ which they bear may become universal. Had our Lord not eaten with publicans and sinners; had he sensitively shrunk from the rough and irreverent handling he received among coarse men who called him "Samaritan," "devil," and "sot"; had he secluded himself in the appreciative household of Bethany; had he not made himself the most accessible Person, little of his Spirit would have passed into other men. Other things being equal, the effect of Christian character varies with the thoroughness of the mixing. It is so with all personal influence.

The mixing being accomplished, how is the process continued? Besides mingling with society and joining freely in all the innocent ways of the world, what is a Christian to do in order that his Christian feeling may be communicated to others? The answer is, He is to be a Christian; not to be anxious to show himself a Christian;

but to be careful to be one. The leaven does not need to say, I am leaven; nor to say to that which lies next it, Be thou leavened. By the inevitable communication of the properties of the leaven to that which lies beside it, and by this again infecting what is beyond, the whole, gradually and unseen, but naturally and certainly, is leavened.

Men are most susceptible to the influence that flows from character. This influence sheds itself off in a thousand ways too subtle to be resisted, and in forms so fine as to insinuate themselves where words would find no entrance.

If, then, you sometimes reproach yourself for not exercising any perceptible influence for good over some friend or child, if it disturbs you that you have done less than you might have done by conversation or direct appeal, it may indeed be quite true that you have fallen short of your duty; yet remember that conduct often tells far more than talk. That conversation is often the most religious which in appearance is most secular; which concerns bills, and cargoes, and investments, and contracts, and family arrangements, and literature; and which, without any illusion to God, the soul, and eternity, secretly impregnates the whole of human life with the Spirit of Christ.—Condensed from The Parables of Our Lord, by Marcus Dods.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The Kingdom of Heaven. Is it a practical ideal? Can it be realized?

2. Rethinking religion, bringing out things new and old. If the use of the word "scribe," verse 52, means to hint at a union of knowledge with discipleship, as Dr. Frank K. Sanders suggests, then it declares that "men are bound to discriminate in their judgments, to use their brains in religion, to realize that their Heavenly Father's house is a storehouse of rich spiritual treasure, and to be interpreting even the old truths in such a way as to make them fresh and vital."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Why did Jesus leave Galilee? 2. What did the woman mean by "Lord" and "Son of David"? 3. How do you explain Jesus' seeming indifference and harshness to the woman? 4. How are dogs regarded in Palestine? 5. Did Jesus mean by his words to the disciples that his mission was limited to the Jews? 6. What traits of character do you admire in the Canaanitish woman?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WHAT OUR RELIGION MEANS TO US

Beginning the Lesson

Why do we have windows in our houses? Yes, they let light in upon us, and permit us to see through them the landscape and the sky. In our lesson today we have short stories, parables of the Kingdom we call them, which serve the same sort of purpose as our windows do; they let light in upon our minds and enable us to see by their means what the Kingdom of Heaven is like.

First, Jesus says the Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed, something that is little in its beginning, but which grows and develops into greatness. It is also like a hidden treasure and like a choice pearl, something of great value, something exceptional. There are several ways of getting it. The first is by saving it—in the garden of your heart. The second is by discovery, and that in two ways. We may come upon it unexpectedly, or we may get it by setting out to find it. But, however we get it we must sacrifice for it. The man who sows the seed has to clear other things—weeds and stones—away to make room for it. And both the treasure-finder and pearl-seeker had to sell all to make it theirs. So to possess the Kingdom you must give up other things which are opposed to it. What does our Golden Text say that the Kingdom is? We must give up what is opposed to righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Hidden Treasure

Did you ever hear of Captain Kidd's treasure? Where was it said to have been buried? When? (In the eighteenth century, somewhere between points a thousand miles apart on the Atlantic coast.) Has anyone ever searched for it?

No stories are more eagerly devoured by the normal boy than stories of adventure in search of hidden treasure, thinks a British writer (H. Jeffs). Do you agree with

him? "Usually there is a clue in the shape of a mysterious cipher, perhaps given to the hero of the story by a dying old sailor to whom he has done a good turn. Sometimes there is a rough map, or diagram, with indications as to where the treasure is located, as in Robert Louis Stevenson's Treasure Island. A messenger boy at The Christian World office, at the time when Treasure Island was appearing in weekly installments in a boy's paper, was so enthralled in following the adventures of the ruffianly John Silver and his crew that on the publication days of the paper, instead of hurrying with manuscript to the printers and hurrying back with printed proofs, he ensconced himself in some alley or under some arch and read the latest installment. He was dismissed."

What are the two little stories in our lesson about finding or searching for treasure? What truth was Jesus enforcing by these stories?

What our Religion Means to us

In the process of bread-making the flour and water are stirred, and then the yeast is added and stirred in and the whole is left to rise.

What is yeast? Let us imagine we are looking at a bit of yeast under a microscope. What we should see would be a vast number of little balls. They are so small that it would take three thousand, three hundred and thirty-three of them laid side by side to make an inch. They are called cells, and they are alive. They are really little plants.

When yeast is put into moistened flour and set in a warm place billions of tiny yeast cells are really being put into the very place where they love to be, and where they can grow best. They go to work fast, feeding on the flour and growing, then dividing and making more cells, feeding again and dividing again, till all the moistened flour is filled with them. The reason they make the bread light is that in feeding on the flour they don't use all of it, but what they do not use is sent off in a gas which has to have more room than the flour had. So the gas pushes out on all sides, and makes little holes in the mass. Bread with enough holes in it is light bread. Baking kills the cells and drives off the gas, but the holes remain.

"Another parable spake he unto them: The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened." In our Bible stands the old English word *leaven,* but it meant *yeast.* Jesus is saying that the Kingdom of Heaven is just like yeast. What he means is that you get the Kingdom of God into a man's heart, and it begins to grow just like yeast. Whether the man means it or not, he begins to make over all those that are around him, and to put the Kingdom of God in their hearts, too. One real Christian means by-and-by two, three, four Christians. So Christianity has grown in the world. When Jesus left this world the Christians could all be put in one room. Now they are counted by the tens and hundreds of millions. They never were growing so fast in number as they are now.

Jesus meant something more. He meant that if the Kingdom of God really and truly gets into one corner of a man's heart, it goes to growing there, until by-and-by it has all his heart. For the love of God, a boy or a girl starts out to be good in one way, or to do one good thing. Pretty soon he finds that there is something else in his life that doesn't fit in with that one thing. It makes him uncomfortable until he has thrown out that other evil thing, too, just as the yeast goes on till all the dough is yeast.

How is God's Kingdom growing in your heart?—Condensed from Five Minutes with the Boys' and Girls' Congregation, by William H. Walker.

Sentence Sermons

Where God is King, there is the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Kingdom of Heaven is set forward daily by the bravest lives of plain people, by faith and love of which the world knows nothing, by prayer and patience seen only by him who seeth in secret.—George Hodges.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up and Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Locate Tyre and Sidon. 2. Whom did Jesus mean by "the lost sheep of Israel"? 3. How can you explain the seeming harshness of Jesus? 4. How did the woman show her quickness of wit? 5. Her faith? 6. What is being done in our day to make the dumb speak? 7. The lame walk? 8. The blind see?

JESUS TEACHING AND HEALING

GOLDEN TEXT: Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Matthew 7.7

LESSON Matthew 13.53 to 16.12 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 119.33-40

MATTHEW 15.21 And Jesus went out thence, and withdrew into the parts of Tyre and Sidon. 22 And behold, a Canaanitish woman came out from those borders, and cried, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a demon. 23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. 24 But he answered and said, I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 25 But she came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. 26 And he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs. 27 But she said, Yea, Lord: for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. 28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was healed from that hour.

29 And Jesus departed thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and he went up into the mountains, and sat there. 30 And there came unto him great multitudes, having with them the lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and they cast them down at his feet; and he healed them: 31 insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing: and they glorified the God of Israel.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. A PROPHET WITHOUT HONOR, 13.53-58.

II. JOHN THE BAPTIST BEHEADED, 14.1-12.

III. THE FIVE THOUSAND FED, 14.13-21.

IV. JESUS WALKING UPON THE WATER, 14.22-33.

V. MANY CURES, 14.34, 35.

VI. CEREMONIAL AND REAL DEFILEMENT, 15.1-20.

VII. FAITH TESTED AND TRIUMPHANT, 15.21-28. To escape the hostility of the Pharisees and of Herod, and to secure rest for himself and his disciples, Jesus left Galilee and went northward into the neighborhood of Tyre and Sidon. From that region a Canaanitish woman came to him. Mark (7.26) calls her a Syrophœnician, a Phœnician of Syria. Both terms, Canaan and Phœnicia, were sometimes used to denote the coast lands of Palestine. People from Tyre and Sidon had seen his miracles in Galilee (Mark 3.7, 8), and from them she may have heard of Jesus' power. Addressing him as "O Lord, thou Son of David," she besought him to cure her daughter who was tormented with a demon.

"Did she think to commend herself by this mode of address? Was it the least bit insincere? Did it amount to something like an attempt to sail under false colors? For she was using a title which meant nothing to her; taking up ground in her appeal to him to which she really had no right. If this was so, it may partly account for our Lord's seeming harshness in so dealing with her that she might be led to rest her suit upon a truer ground. Those words of his that follow would bring home to her her mistake in addressing him as the Son of David" (F. G. Cholmondeley).

Though Jesus answered not a word she continued to cry after him so persistently that the disciples urged him to send her away. They were willing that her plea should be granted and her daughter cured if only they might be left in peace. They were not thinking of her sorrow, but of their own discomfort occasioned by her persistent entreaties. "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," returned Jesus. He uses the word "lost" here in the sense of "neglected." It was Ezekiel who said of the shepherds of Israel in his day, "The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought back that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and rigor have ye ruled over them." Jesus concentrated his efforts upon the neglected in his own land, leaving to others the mission among those not of that fold. It was a wise limitation of his ministry. "It did not limit his sympathies, nor interfere with his consciousness of being Savior and King of the whole world. But he knew that there was an order

of development in the Kingdom, and that at its then stage the surest way to attain the ultimate universality was rigid limitation of it to the chosen people." R. C. Gillie has an apt illustration here. "Our Lord's problem was the same as that of a farmer who, with a little seed-corn, desires to cultivate a wide space of virgin soil. How will he use it? Will he scatter it broadcast everywhere? If so, he may gain only a scanty harvest, and the seed-corn may be wasted. No, he devotes his attention to one little plot, carefully selected from the best ground. If he can raise a good harvest there, he will be able to sow more widely next year, and ultimately occupy the whole of the vacant soil. That involves concentration on the little plot first. Someone may say, But are you going to leave all these spaces untilled, unsown? Yes, is the answer, for a time; but only that there may be abundant seed in due course for every acre of fallow ground."

"'I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' The engrossing character of a man's occupation, preventing him from participating in outside affairs, indicates that through it the main part of his Father's purpose for his life is to be accomplished. A mother's absorbing family points her to her home as the scene of her God-appointed ministry. The particular position we fill in society, while it binds us with a host of conventions that are sometimes irksome, gives us points of contact with certain of God's children whom we should never otherwise touch" (Henry Sloane Coffin).

Prostrating herself at Jesus' feet, the woman cried, "Lord, help me!" It was her daughter who needed help, but she identifies herself with her child, as is the way with mothers. The cure of her daughter would help the mother more than anything else, for she loved her child more than she loved herself. "It is not fitting to take the bread from the children (the Jews) and cast it to the dogs (the Gentiles)" said Jesus. See Light from Oriental Life.

"O, yes it is," she eagerly replied, "for even the dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their master's table, and I, a Gentile, may rightfully have what will be no loss to the children, the Jews." "She catches him in his own words," observes Luther. Then came the longed for words of help, coupled with words of praise. "O woman, great is thy faith; be it as you wish." Voicing the commonly accepted interpretation of Jesus' first words, that by them he was trying her faith, Trench says: "He had shown to her for a while, like Joseph to his brethren, the aspect of severity; but like Joseph, he could not maintain it long—or rather, he would not maintain it an instant longer than was needful, and after that word of hers, that mighty word of an undoubting faith, it was needful no more."

"This woman said to Christ, 'I in my human need have a right to you, who are the love of God humanly manifest.' And Christ replied, 'Indeed you have, and that claim of yours is itself the assurance of your right. No one can claim me so and not have me. Such a claim opens the channels between your life and mine, and what there is in me must flow into you.' Something as real, as essential, as natural, as inevitable as that seems to me to be in his words" (Phillips Brooks).

"'O woman, great is thy faith.' Faith is not a form which one holds, but a power which holds one. When the Apostle Paul says that we walk by faith, he expresses with precision the teaching of Jesus. Faith is not a way of talking, but a way of walking. It is not a problem to answer, but a path to follow" (Francis Greenwood Peabody).

And her daughter was healed from that hour. "'As a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed,' was said to a hero of faith in Old Testament times; and this Canaanitish woman is the New Testament counterpart of Jacob in the hour when he became Israel. Therefore, if Jacob obtained the title of a spiritual prince, we may call her a spiritual princess" (James Stalker).

"As the smitten diamond shatters the hammer and anvil, as true gold survives the hottest furnace, so the sincere, honest, trusty heart triumphs over all difficulties, denials, and delays" (W. L. Watkinson).

VIII. CURES IN GALILEE, 15.29-31.

"Not him crucified and slain,
Not in agonies of pain,
Not with bleeding hands and feet,
Did the Monk his Master see;
But him in the village street,

In the house or harvest-field,
Halt and lame and blind he healed
When he walked in Galilee" (Longfellow).

"Every once in a while the follower of Jesus Christ needs to remind himself that religion makes certain very positive demands of him. This human life of ours has its evils and its ills and the man who would claim to be a follower of Jesus cannot by any possibility justify himself in anything like indifference to all three. Apparently he was never indifferent to anything that affected the well-being of the people even in a physical way. And if he teaches us that we as his followers have a duty to perform in relation to these physical ills of life surely he would teach us that our duty is equally plain in regard to ills and evils of a still more positive character. There are diseases that ruin the bodies of men, but there are as well ill things in the world that ruin the minds of men, that corrupt their souls. And against all these things the whole spirit and teaching of Jesus tell us we as his followers must wage a relentless warfare. And the man who insists on basking himself in the comforts and satisfactions of his religion, and refuses to listen to its call to service and sacrifice and broadening human fellowship and love is denying something that must always be very fundamental in that religion" (The New Outlook).

IX. THE FOUR THOUSAND FED, 15.32-39.

X. A SIGN ASKED AND REFUSED, 16.1-4.

XI. A WARNING, 16.5-12.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs, verse 26. Jesus was repeating here a common proverb which to Gentile ears accustomed to the saying, would not sound as offensive as it does to us. The term "dog of a Gentile," Professor Stapfer tells us, was as common in the first century in Palestine as the term "dog of a Christian" afterwards became. Compare the current Mohammedan expression, "infidel dogs."

Dogs in Palestine are usually gaunt, halfstarved, homeless animals that roam the streets at will and act as public scavengers, disposing of any scraps of food and refuse they can find.

Harry Franck in his account of Tramping in Palestine, gives this enlightening conversation:

"An American who was in Nazareth long ago," said a native, "told me a strange story. I did not believe him, for it cannot be true. He said that in America people buy dogs!" and the mere suggestion of so ludicrous a transaction sent the assembled group into paroxysms of laughter.

"They do," I replied. The pompous ex-mayor fell into such convulsions of merriment that his rotund face grew the color of burnished copper. "Buy dogs?" roared his sons in a chorus of several languages. "But what for?"

Never having settled that question entirely to my own satisfaction, I parried it with another: "How do you get a dog if you want one?" "W-w-w-why," answered the eldest son, wiping the tears from his eyes, "if anyone wants a dog, he tells some one else, and they give him one. But whoever wants a dog?"

Yea, Lord: for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table, verse 27. Dr. H. Clay Trumbull found a new meaning to the Bible references to crumbs when traveling in Palestine. "The Bedouins seem to live on crumbs. As we sat at our meal, our Arab attendants would watch at a distance, and when we had left the table every scrap on it was eagerly devoured by them. They would literally eat every egg-shell, every chicken-bone, every potato-skin and bread crust discarded by us."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

On various occasions Jesus had come into conflict with the scribes and Pharisees. In the verses just preceding those selected for our lesson, we see how Jesus bitterly antagonized the rulers and alienated many of the people. It was best for him and his disciples to go into temporary exile. Accordingly they went northward into the region of Tyre and Sidon.

"Celsus (the opponent of Christianity, 170 A.D.) blamed Christ's policy of withdrawal from danger as cowardly. Origen well replied that it was part of Christ's education of the disciples, 'teaching them not at random, or unseasonably, or without sufficient object, to encounter dangers.'"

Tyre and Sidon were flourishing cities of Phœnicia, twenty-five miles apart on the Mediterranean coast.

Tyre

The Sea of Galilee, thirty-five miles to the southeast of Tyre, was Jesus' objective point on leaving Phœnicia. He probably followed the great road which led across the grand highlands of Northern Galilee over the Libanus and Antilibanus mountains, and then went southward to a "mountain" on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Something of this woman's ready wit and nimbleness of mind, as well as all of her faith in the Master and persistence in her quest, every Church school teacher needs. Would you not prophesy instant failure for a teacher who should go to his class in the spirit of the boy sent out to sell nails and whose first remark to the retail dealer was, "You don't want any nails, do you?" Of course the answer was a curt "No, I don't."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

FAITH TESTED AND TRIUMPHANT

Beginning the Lesson

It was the Canaanitish woman's beautiful answer to the Lord's words which procured the granting of her request and gave the incident its place in the gospel history. "Yes, Lord. Let the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs." "Yes, Lord." She accepts the situation and still urges her plea. How differently she might have acted! She might have retired, as many who are deserving of the aid of others are only too ready to do, with her woe unrelieved, for lack of a gentle importunity. Or she might have claimed the help she thought impossible by seeking, like many of those who are unworthy of receiving benefits, to establish an unreasonable claim upon him to whom she had applied. Neither of these courses did she elect to follow. Jesus had likened her to the dogs; it is only the dog's portion, after all, that she craves. The bread is prepared for the children; for them it is set upon the board. But no one grudges to the dogs patiently waiting beneath the table the overflow of the generous meal, the crumbs that will fall as the children take their share.

Here is the greatness of her faith. She recognizes, as the crowds who followed Jesus in Galilee, seeking him because of the loaves, failed to recognize, that the works of mercy wrought by those loving hands were not, after all, the bread which was to satisfy the children of God; they were the overflow of a life which was given so freely, so fully, go generously, for the sons of men that there were gifts even for the unthankful and the evil. The woman's answer revealed how well she knew that the blessing which she coveted was not all the Master had to give. There were treasures of love and goodness for which she had not dared to ask. Here surely is a faith that leaves itself absolutely in the hands of him in whom the soul confides.—G. A. Simpson.

Faith Tested and Triumphant

What a wonder-story is that of the Syro-Phœnician woman! The Master conceals himself from her; treats her anguish with apparent indifference; preserves a frigid silence in face of her passionate entreaty, and offers exasperating rebuffs in reply to her desperate arguments! But did he design to destroy her faith? Let us see! Like a gallant besieger, she sat down before the city with indomitable courage and patience. Beaten back at one gate, she instantly stormed another. Resisted at one redoubt, she mustered all her forces in an effort to reduce a second. And at last Jesus answered and said unto her, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." The capitulation was a predetermined policy; but the courage and pertinacity of the besieger must be tested to the utmost before the gates can be finally thrown open.—W. F. Boreham, in Faces in the Fire.

The Silence of God is Often the Prelude to His Richest Speech

You know what it is to come to a pause in the music of some great composition, some symphony by Beethoven or some oratorio by Handel. At a signal from the conductor there is a sudden silence over the vast orchestra that may be felt. Every violin has ceased to throb, every cornet has ceased to sound, until, after a breathless moment that seems to quiver with the tenseness of its expectancy, the conductor lets his baton fall. Then, in a twinkling, every instrument takes up its strain again. The violin makes the music; the cornets prolong it. The drums boom it forth. The cymbals clash it. The organ adds to it the weight of its mightiest diapason, until, in a perfect blaze of melody, the music reaches its close. The pause was but the prelude to the climax.

So in life there come, as I have said, times when God seems silent. He seems deaf to our entreaty. He is regardless of our need. At such a time we are tempted to say, like a woman to a friend of mine, "If there is a God, which I very much doubt, he is a hard cruel God."

The woman of Canaan teaches us a grander lesson—to press "through the darkness up to God"; to "follow on to know the Lord"; to say with Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." To such the morning will come. The long night of sorrow will pass at last. God will speak; speak a word whose music shall fill our days with melody. "O man, O woman, great is thy faith! Be it unto thee as thou wilt," for "Thy will is mine."—W. Mackintosh Mackay, in The Woman of Tact.

What Jesus Meant by Faith

Faith was in Jesus' view a great force. It could work miracles; uproot mountains; bring about mighty moral changes. It was a necessary condition of his own ability to do miraculous works. Striking manifestations of faith were a great source of delight to him. He remarked upon them; he praised them; he even went so far as to express surprise and admiration on witnessing them.

In his teaching, we find no attempt at a definition of faith. He used the word in the simple, popular sense rooted in Old Testament usage, and took for granted that the religious instincts of his hearers would help them to understand sufficiently what he meant. But the import of the term as it occurs in the Gospels might be expressed by the single word "receptivity." An open mind receiving the announcements of the Kingdom as at once true tidings and good tidings, credible and worthy of all acceptation, such was faith, in the dialect of Jesus.

As thus defined, faith appears a very simple thing, not beyond the capacity of a child. And simple indeed it is, simple as the opening of the mouth to inhale air, or to receive food. Nevertheless, faith is not a commonplace virtue. It is a heroic attainment, implying qualities of mind and heart by no means to be found in every man you meet. In the sphere of religion, faith is exercised about matters which

appeal to the higher nature of man, and which it requires a certain moral elevation to appreciate. Here, too, the things about which faith is conversant are out of the common course. We have to do with the unusual, the unexpected, the improbable, the apparently impossible. The exercise of faith on such objects demands high, rare qualities; power of original thought, imagination, freedom of mind from the bondage of custom, audacity to conceive and expect things out of the beaten track.—A. B. Bruce, in The Galilean Gospel.

Ask and it Shall Be Given you

"You have helped me, Doctor Brown," said Mrs. Graham to her rector, "toward the lost clue of triumphant living. You spoke of simplicity of life in the midst of modern complexity and again of Christlike unselfishness. But I need even more!"

"Of course you do," replied Doctor Brown cordially. "Every living soul needs more. We all must have the experience of what Jesus called 'faith.' If we are going to live triumphantly we must have the consciousness of a living and supremely loving Unseen Companion. Without that there can be little sense of triumph in any life."

"Ah," sighed Mrs. Graham, "but just there is the difficulty! Two thousand years ago they didn't know about natural laws and the evolutionary theory and Biblical criticism hadn't been thought of. It's different now, and it's vastly harder to have faith."

"Do you think so?" asked Doctor Brown. "But every reason that ever existed for faith exists still. Jesus discovered certain truths. They are truths still. Nothing has been discovered that in the slightest degree discredits his words. Nothing ever will."

"What, then, was the essential discovery he made?" asked Mrs. Graham.

"It was his message to men that they really had a Heavenly Father; that that Father controlled everything in this universe; that never for a moment's time could he forget any one of us or our needs; that he knows what we have need of before we ask; that he is far more willing to give than we are to receive. If imperfect earthly fathers delight in giving to their children, then God delights still more. The eternal Sorrow in the heart of God is simply that we won't come nearer to him in order that he may give us more."

"But how can I find surely that it's true?" asked Mrs. Graham.

"Exactly as he did," replied the rector. "Exactly as every other person did who has found it to be true. By putting it to the test. Assume that Jesus was right, and act accordingly. Assume that there is Some One near—'closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet.' When you are discouraged, ask him for courage; when you need strength, ask him for strength. Whenever you need anything, ask him for what you need. You never will be disappointed. You may not receive the precise thing you ask. Often you will not, for you can't always know what's best for you; but you always will find that he has stood by you and helped unutterably. Gradually and inevitably you will come to know he will never forsake you."

"It's so simple I surely can try it," replied Mrs. Graham.—The Youth's Companion.

Ask and it Shall Be Given You

The desire of the heart must become the expression of the lips. Our Lord more than once asked those who cried to him for mercy, "What wilt thou?" He wanted them to say what they desired. To speak it out roused their whole being into action, brought them into contact with him, and wakened their expectation. To pray is to enter into God's presence, to claim and secure his attention, to have distinct dealing with him in regard to some request, to commit our need to his faithfulness and leave it there. It is in so doing that we become fully conscious of what we are seeking.

Then we are to believe that God will answer our prayer. This belief rests on three things: (1) faith in God as a fountain of good; (2) the harmony of our request with his will; (3) his freedom in the use of ways and means.

(1) Tennyson never uttered a truer thought than this: "Prayer is like opening a sluice gate between the great ocean and our little channels; when the great sea gathers itself together and flows in at full tide."

(2) Do we ask for relief—for ourselves or for our dear ones—from sickness, from anxiety, from bereavement? Do we ask for strength, for livelihood, for guidance, for success? It is well. Yet we recognize that, if we could learn aright, our greater longing, even in these, would be for the perfectly unthwarted consummation of God's divinely wise and loving will.

(3) "I never was deeply interested in any object," declared Adoniram Judson, "I never prayed sincerely and earnestly for anything, but it came; at some time—no matter at how distant a day—somehow, in some shape, probably the last I should advise—it came."—Condensed from The Expository Times.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Faith's Power over Jesus. See Chapter VIII of Sermons Preached in English Churches, by Phillips Brooks.

2. The lesson for Christian workers in Jesus' limitation of his own ministry. No one can do everything. No one can answer every appeal that awakens his sympathy or interest. There must be concentration upon what is most worth while.

3. The situation in our country of the lost sheep of the house of Israel. A British visitor to the United States found the greatest spiritual need among the Jews of New York City. "Never, in the whole history of the Dispersion," he said, "has such a community of Jews gathered in one place. The outward condition of poverty and squalor in which many of them live is sad enough, but their spiritual condition is still sadder. Having broken loose from the trammels of Rabbinism, by which they were held in the countries whence they came, many of them are fast drifting into materialism and irreligion. The only thing that could direct these 'lost sheep of the House of Israel' back to the path which leads to God is the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

Ask twelve pupils to come prepared to contribute some thought upon the topic discussed in class for the Sunday of the past Quarter which you assigned to each one.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

FAITH THAT WINS

Beginning the Lesson

Robert Moffat, the great missionary, was once asked to lead the worship in a Boer family. He asked the farmer to bring in his servants. "Oh!" exclaimed the farmer in disgust. "Let us bring in also the baboons and the dogs!" Then the great-hearted missionary repeated these words: "Yea, Lord; even the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs," and at once the farmer exclaimed, "Wait, and I'll bring in all my Kaffirs." Afterwards he said to Dr. Moffat, "You took a hard hammer, and you have broken a hard heart." What was the story which that farmer knew so well, but whose lesson he had not put into practice?

Another Instance of Quick Wit and Great Faith

Napoleon was one day reviewing his troops at Paris, when he accidentally dropped his reins and the spirited horse at once dashed off. A private soldier down the line sprang forward, seized the reins and checked the horse. "Much obliged to you, Captain," was Napoleon's acknowledgment. "Of what regiment, sire?" was the soldier's quick rejoinder. Napoleon was greatly pleased by his quick wit and ready faith in him, and replied, "Of my guards." The soldier put down his musket and went at once to the officers' tent to await his installation as captain of the guards, which soon took place.

Whose quick wit and ready faith in the greatest of all commanders does this incident recall?

Two Instances of Faith that Won

When Mary Moffat, in the wilds of Africa, received a letter from a friend in England, asking what she wished to have sent them, Robert Moffat and she had been laboring there for ten years and had not been rewarded by a single convert. Yet she wrote bravely back, "Send us a communion service; we shall want it some day." The service reached them three years later, on the day before their first converts were baptized.

In 1887 a few earnest missionary workers met for prayer and petitioned God for one hundred new missionaries and fifty thousand dollars. As they were talking the matter over before going home, Hudson Taylor said: "Don't you think, before we go, it would be well to thank the Lord for sending us these things? He has surely heard us, and we may not all be able to meet together for prayer again." And then they all knelt once more and poured forth their hearts in gratitude to God

for what he was going to do. Before the close of the year, the missionaries and the money had been provided.

What it Means to Put our Faith in God

I remember a story which I heard Professor Chamberlain of Chicago Seminary tell a good many years ago. He had a boy who was weak and sickly, and had to be carried a great deal. Once, as Professor Chamberlain was starting to carry him downstairs, the boy threw his arms around his father's neck and said, "You won't let me fall, will you, Papa?" Just a timid little lad, dreadfully afraid of falling, and yet knowing that his father would hold him fast, but clinging to him as if he weren't quite sure, after all.

When we are grown, how much we have to trust other people! We ride on the railroad train. We cannot guide the locomotive on its way through the wilderness of tracks and across the plains and mountains. We have to trust someone else to do it. We sail the ocean. We cannot steer the ship through storms and rocks and twisted channels. We have to trust someone else to do that. We have a house to build, a watch to mend, a tool to make. We cannot do these things for ourselves. We have to let someone else make them for us. We cannot delve into all the mines of truth which we need. We have to let someone else do it for us, and trust them to tell us what the truth is.

Now, every time we let somebody do something for us that we cannot do for ourselves, we put faith in them. That is what faith is. It means believing that others can do the thing which we cannot do for ourselves. But it is more than that. It is letting them do it, and doing our part, putting our arms around father's neck, going on board the train or the ship, giving the jeweller our broken watch, putting our money in the bank.

That is just what Jesus means by faith in God. It is letting God help us with our sins. It is believing he can do it, and it is doing our part, opening our hearts to him. We cannot see God. We seldom do see the people we trust. We can put faith in him just the same.—William H. Walker, in Five Minutes with the Boys' and Girls' Congregation.

Jesus Went about Doing Good

There are many people in this world whose lives are like flowers set in north windows. They never really have a chance to grow and bloom. The cold winds of unkind criticism sift in and blight them. The good sunlight of encouragement goes by on the other side. I suppose the flower in the south window never realized what a hard time the other flower had. It was so much in the sunlight itself that probably it never could think how dreary it would be to stand where the sunlight never fell. It had such a fortunate lot of its own that perhaps it would think that all flowers had that same happy chance. And there are a lot of us who live in south windows, and who have love and kindness fall on us like the sunlight, and every good chance to blossom and grow, who may not stop to think of the boys and girls who live in north windows, with bad homes, and too little to eat, and worst of all, too little love.

Now the beautiful chance which we have that the flower does not have, is that we can help to change conditions for the boys and girls who are in the hard place. We can change things for the flower and we can change things for people, just as Jesus did when "he went about doing good." We can put them into the places where they will have a chance. We can go out after the lonely boy and girl and bring them where the sunlight of friendship will shine on them. We can take the ones who are shrinking within themselves because mean things are being said about them and pour the warmth of our own encouragement round them. We can make life all full of sunny windows if we choose for any number of unhappy people, and it will be wonderful to see the lives that looked shrivelled begin to grow and bloom.—W. Russell Bowie, in Sunny Windows.

Sentence Sermons

The tests of life are to make not to break us.—Maltbie D. Babcock.

Be boundless in thy faith, for not misspent
Is confidence unto the Father lent.—George Macdonald.

Art thou a beggar at God's door? Be sure thou gettest a great bowl, for as thy bowl is, so will be thy mess.—John Bunyan.

REVIEW

GOLDEN TEXT: Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9.6

DEVOTIONAL READING John 10.7-16

A SUMMARY OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY: HE WENT ABOUT DOING GOOD

Perhaps this, on the whole, is the best summary of our Lord's earthly ministry: he went about doing good (Acts 10.28). In the three years of his public ministry he was so busy that sometimes he had no time to take his food.

Some great artists have almost fixed in our imagination the type of countenance which we now associate with Jesus: the central face of the Last Supper in Milan, for example, or Rembrandt's Jesus in the hundred guilder print, Healing the Sick, or Hoffman's Jesus in the Temple, that exquisite face. But we have no authentic face of Jesus, and probably all artists err in giving to him a countenance too smooth and untroubled. His countenance must have borne the marks of anguish and care. For, as a man of genius said almost two hundred years ago, "When Christ was only thirty-two, those who saw him took him to be a man of fifty!" "Thou art not yet fifty" John 8.57)—so much had life taken out of him.

No great work is ever done easily. There were places where, we read, he could do no work because of something wanting in the circumstances, something wanting in the hearts of the people, wanting in the heart of the man for whom he was ready to do the great work. We read again that sometimes our Lord would groan in his spirit as though he were wrestling with some obstinate force which was pitting itself against his power. Nothing was done easily that Jesus did. It wore him out, so that again and again he retired to a mountain apart, there to lay open his soul to the energy of God.

He went about doing good. He looked about to see where good might be done. We sometimes excuse ourselves because we think we have done all the good that is clamantly necessary in the little place where we stand.

He went about doing good by his lips, by his hands, by himself. The biggest thing a man can do for his age or for the world is himself to be a good man and to give himself away for some great thought or dream of faith.—Condensed from an Address by John A. Hutton.

He went about, they said,
  In doing good:
He challenged men to follow,
  If they would.

He knew no creed, nor system,
  But to live
A life of loving service,
  And to give:

To give of cheer and faith,
  Was his appeal;
To hearten; hope inspire;
  The hurt to heal.

Give thou of life and love:
  Meet thou the test:
Bid them that love and serve,
  To join the quest.—Hiram B. Harris.

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

Explain the Biblical allusion in each of the following quotations:

"The gift which lay dormant was dedicated to the Master's use, and it expanded more than a hundredfold."

In simple faith like theirs who heard
Beside the Syrian sea
The gracious calling of the Lord,
Let us, like them, without a word,
Rise up and follow thee.—Whittier.

The mission of Jesus is to create a type of character which shall be sown like good seed in the waiting field and shall possess it as children of the Kingdom.—Francis G. Peabody.

The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.—Shakespeare.

"When the persecutors thought that the Christians were scattered like chaff, it appeared that they had been scattered like seed. The mustard seed, planted with tears and watered with blood, took firm root in the earth and held tenaciously."

She it was that stood in Bethlehem on the night when
Herod's sword swept its nemesis of Innocents.—DeQuincy.

Acts, seemingly virtuous, are often nothing more than the sheep's clothing in which the wolf envelops himself in order that he may deceive and devour the sheep.—Wadsworth.

The friend of God will yearn after lonely men everywhere; he will be the friend of publicans and sinners.—J. H. Jowett.

Not he who scorns the Savior's yoke
Should wear the cross upon his heart.—Pope.

With canine loyalty I wagged an unoffended tail, and accepted one-third of the crumbs that had fallen from the table of the proud.—C. E. Montague.

God's guiding star is over us, if we but lift our eyes,
And wise men still, who seek his will,
Find many a glad surprise.—E. L. Smiley.

"If an evil like this is ever to be overcome, it is going to be done by faith, even though it looks like mustard seed."

Many people think that their lives are rock-founded, because they have a nebulous admiration for the moral teachings of Jesus.—Henry F. Cope.

"'I do not see God!' a soul made plaint;
'O for an angel hand to tear the veil apart;
Hide not from me thy face, I strive, I faint!'
The silence whispered, 'Art thou pure in heart?'"

If we judge the tree by its fruits, the same saintliness grows on the different branches of the Church universal, and the same potentialities of goodness reside in all.—Charles H. Brent.

As in life's best hours, we hear
By the spirit's finer ear
His low voice within us, thus
The All-Father heareth us;
And his holy ear we pain
With our noisy words and vain.—Whittier.

Various senators who always must be heard for their much speaking had their say.—The Outlook.

I gave up all to follow thee—
Even like him who gave his nets
To winds and waves by Galilee.—Thomas Bailey Aldrich.

Do you expect that religion is so cheap, that without giving time you can find close fellowship with God? You cannot; this pearl is worth everything.—Andrew Murray.

You have a notion in your mind as to how Christ is coming into your life, and you are watching with the carefulness of a detective to see if he comes that way. If your experience does not come that way you will be disappointed. You are on the track of John the Baptist.—John Douglas Adam.

The real test of the final worth of any high experience comes when we inquire

as to whether it can be carried from the mount of inspiration out upon the plain of useful achievement and on into the deserts of difficulty.—C. R. Brown.

QUESTIONS UPON THE QUARTER'S LESSONS

For Young People and Adults

1. Describe three important events in the life of Jesus thus far studied.
2. What was the meaning of each of the three temptations of Jesus?
3. What is the lesson which these words recall: "What Christ does is the best answer to the question as to who he is"?
4. What did Jesus say about being perfect, and what did he mean by this?
5. What were his lessons about anxiety?
6. Why did Jesus teach in parables?
7. What did he have to say about hypocrisy?
8. What was Jesus' teaching about himself?
9. What has been the most helpful lesson during the Quarter? Why?
10. What universal canon of judgment did Jesus give by which to test the moral quality of anything?
11. What are the differences between a Christian and one who is not?
12. Who is a Christian according to Christ?

For Intermediates and Seniors

1. What Christmas story does Matthew tell?
2. What other story of Christ's birth of Jesus is told, and in what Gospel?
3. In what town was Jesus born, in what town did he live as a boy, and what town was his headquarters during his public ministry?
4. After his baptism, in what three ways was Jesus tempted?
5. Who were the first four disciples, where did Jesus find them, what did he say to them when he called them, and what did he mean?
6. Name the twelve disciples.
7. What motive in praying did Jesus rebuke?
8. Jean Ingelow once exclaimed, "I am athirst for God, the living God!" What Beatitude applied to her?
9. What is the Golden Rule?
10. Of what two miracles have we heard in these lessons?
11. What is a parable?
12. What parables have we had in this Quarter's lessons?
13. What is the lesson of the Parable of the Sower?
14. What is the lesson of the Parable of the Leaven?
15. What is the lesson of the Parable of the Pearl of Great Price?
16. Which parable do you like best? Why? Write it.
17. What illustration did Jesus give which shows the two ways of building a life?
18. What is one thing that you should do at home if you are a follower of Christ? At school? Among friends?

QUESTIONS UPON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

1. What was the Logia of Matthew?
2. What do we know about Matthew?
3. When was the Gospel written?
4. For whom was Matthew's Gospel written?
5. What teachings does it give which have for the Jews a particular significance?
6. What great addresses are found only in Matthew's Gospel?
7. What parables are given only by Matthew?
8. What chapters of Matthew contain the Sermon on the Mount?
9. In what chapters are the Parables of the Kingdom found?
10. Where is the Lord's Prayer given?
11. Where are the Beatitudes?
12. Where is the Golden Rule given?

WRITTEN WORK

For Young People and Adults

1. How Jesus Began his Work.
2. The Great Physician.
3. The Great Teacher.

4. Christ's Methods in the Training of the Twelve.
5. The Gospel According to Matthew.
6. The Christian Conception of Prayer.

For Intermediates and Seniors

1. Zebedee's Story of the Call of James and John.
2. A Day Spent in Jesus' Company in Palestine.
3. The Beatitudes and their Meaning.
4. Words of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount.
5. What Jesus said about Prayer.
6. The Parable of the Sower and its Explanation.

A REVIEW OF CHRIST'S WORDS

Finish these sentences:

1. Lay not up for yourselves—.
2. Suffer it now, for—.
3. Even so every good tree—.
4. Blessed are they that—.
5. And whosoever shall give—.
6. Man shall not live by—.
7. Come ye after me—.
8. Seek ye first—.
9. The harvest indeed is—.
10. This is my beloved—.
11. Take my yoke—.
12. Ye therefore shall be—.
13. Thou shalt worship—.
14. Think not that I came—.
15. Love your enemies and—.
16. Where thy treasure is—.
17. Be not therefore anxious—.
18. All things therefore whatsoever—.
19. When thou prayest, enter—.
20. By their fruits—.
21. Not everyone that saith—.
22. Go ye and learn what—.
23. All things have been delivered—.
24. Come unto me and—.
25. Do men gather—.
26. I thank thee, O—.
27. They that are whole—.
28. The Kingdom of heaven is like—.
29. When you are inclined to worry, what words of Jesus should you recall?
30. When you long for rest, what words of Jesus are comforting?
31. Where will you find Jesus' idea of a Christian?
32. What are some of Jesus' principles of righteous living?

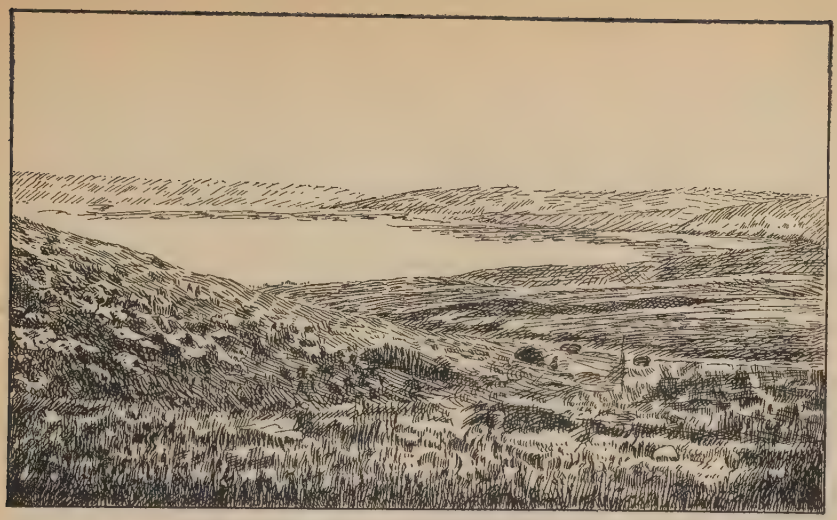
QUESTIONS TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

For Young People and Adults

1. How did Peter gain his knowledge of who Jesus is? 2. When did Jesus tell Simon his name should be Peter, and what is the meaning of that name? 3. Should we be more likely to follow Christ if he had said that discipleship made only trifling demands upon one? 4. Write on a slip of paper the changes you will make in your way of living if you endeavor to live up to the principles of Christian life enunciated in verses 24-26. Put the paper away where you can refer to it from time to time.

For Intermediates and Seniors

1. What did the Baptist call Jesus? 2. What question did the disciples ask each other after the storm on the lake? (Matthew 8.26.) 3. What claims of Jesus have we had in our lessons? 4. When before had Jesus said, "Get thee behind me, Satan?" 5. What does it mean to deny oneself? 6. What are the important words in the last clause of verse 25?



THE NORTHERN END OF THE SEA OF GALILEE

SECOND QUARTER

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM: STUDIES IN MATTHEW

(Second Half of a Six-months' Course)

LESSON I—APRIL 6

THE LAW OF THE CROSS

GOLDEN TEXT: If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. Matthew 16.24

LESSON Matthew 16.13 to 17.27 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 53.7-12

MATTHEW 16.13 Now when Jesus came into the parts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that the Son of man is? 14 And they said, Some *say* John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. 15 He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. 18 And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 20 Then charged he the disciples that they should tell no man that he was the Christ.

21 From that time began Jesus to show unto his disciples, that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up. 22 And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee. 23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men. 24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 25 For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. 26 For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. JESUS A MAN OF TREMENDOUS POWER, verses 13, 14. When in the region near Cæsarea Philippi, where Jesus and his disciples had gone, Jesus suddenly

asked them, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" It is not thought that the phrase, "the Son of man," was associated in the popular mind with the idea of the Messiah. Had it been, Jesus would not have used it, as he did, early in his ministry. There is evidently in his question here no implication as to his identity. Mark and Luke give his question as, "Who do men say I am?"

The disciples answered that some thought he was John the Baptist (as Herod said, Matthew 14.2); some, that he was Elijah; and others, Jeremiah or some other of the prophets. "There was no man then living with whom he could be compared. We do the same thing. When we want to stir men's hearts, we appeal to the dead; when we search for the great, we descend into the grave, we talk of Shakespeare and Cæsar, of Charlemagne and Alfred the Great, of Lincoln and Webster, we dare not use the name of a man living. That is what the Jews did. This tells very clearly that to them he was a man of tremendous power" (C. E. Jefferson). "Did you ever think of the vast difference there is between the characters of Elijah and Jeremiah?" questions G. H. Morrison. "The one is ardent, enthusiastic, fierce sometimes. The other is the prophet of the tender heart. And the remarkable thing is that the common people should have taken these types which are so wide apart, and should have found in both the character of Christ. In other words, the impression which Jesus made was that of a complex, inclusive personality. You could not exhaust him by a single phophet. It took the range of the greatest to portray his character."

II. JESUS THE CHRIST, verses 15, 16. "But who say ye that I am?" Jesus further questioned. And Peter, speaking not for himself alone but as spokesman for the group, answered with conviction, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." "The living God" is an Old Testament expression: compare Hosea 1.10. *Christ* is the translation of a Greek word, and *Messiah* is the translation of a Hebrew word, both of which mean *the Anointed.* Hebrew Kings were anointed with oil when given their office, and the Spiritual King was thought of as the Anointed, the Chosen One of God, until the "The Anointed," The Christ, became the name by which he was designated.

"The term Christ has taken on a still deeper meaning as the centuries have passed. It means now that Divine Person who in his glorious humanity reveals the nature and the will of God the Father, shows us what we may also become by the help of God, and proves himself a Savior from sin to all who trust themselves to him in love and obedience" (Azora S. Davis).

III. A GREAT COMMENDATION, verses 17-19. "Simon, son of John," Jesus exclaimed, greatly moved, "human lips (flesh and blood, mortal man) have not revealed this to you; the knowledge has come through my Father in heaven." "Jesus meant that humanity itself can never discover God or find him out. The recognition of God must always be God's own disclosures of himself in the heart of man."

"Peter's answer thrilled our Master to the depths. He was understood. How instantly did it alleviate and mitigate all the bitter pain he had to bear! And whenever in this difficult life of ours God sends us somebody whom we can trust—who we are sure will never misinterpret—who never judges us except in love—who appreciates and understands—what earthly comfort in all the range of comfort can for one moment be compared with that?" (George H. Morrison).

"Thou hast said, I am the Christ; I now say to thee, Thou art Peter." Recall how Jesus foretold (John 1.42) that shifting Simon would attain a rocklike character. "Thou art Peter (*petrose,* rock), and upon this rock, (*petra,* rock), I will build my church": there is a play upon words here. Whether "this rock" means Peter as he then was, or Peter as he afterwards became, or Peter's confession, or the fact of the Lord's Messiahship, has been much debated and disputed. The words are inscribed in Latin around the interior of the dome of St. Peter's, Rome. The claims of the Papacy rest not only upon this verse but also upon the contention that Peter became the first Bishop of Rome, and that his authority was transmitted to succeeding popes. "The Roman Catholic Launoy reckons that seventeen Fathers regard Peter as the rock; forty-four regard Peter's confession as the rock; sixteen regard Christ himself as the rock; while eight are of the opinion that the Church is built on all the apostles." In the metaphor of 1 Peter 2.4-8, Jesus is the foundation of his Church;

in that of Ephesians 2.20, he is the keystone; while Peter primarily here, but also his fellow disciples (ye also, as living stones, 1 Peter 2.5) and all who have his faith and zeal, are foundation stones of the Kingdom of Heaven.

"'I will build my church.' Jesus was building a church. I do not mean a stone structure with a spire on it—one cannot build a church out of stone, or boards, or brick. With that material one can only build the building where some church may meet. The church itself is built out of men and women, young men and maidens, boys and girls, who have seen in Christ what Peter saw in him, who have declared their loyalty to him as Peter declared his loyalty, who are undertaking to live in that same high mood. Out of that sort of material—on that foundation, he will build his church. The Master recognized the necessity for organized effort. One cannot sing an oratorio all by himself. I care not how splendid his voice may be, he must merge his voice in a chorus of voices. The same sound principle holds when we come to sing the Lord's song and to do the Lord's work. It can only be done when men and women come together, are agreed, and begin to act in concert as members of the body of Christ" (Dr. C. R. Brown).

"And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Since there is no English word to correspond to the Hebrew *sheol,* the invisible world, the abode of the dead, the Revisers have used the Latin word *Hades.* Our word *hell,* which originally meant *sheol,* has acquired the meaning of the abode of the wicked. The church is indestructible. "As the church is often represented as a city, so now its great adversary Death is poetically represented as a fortified city with walls and gates" (Dummelow).

"I will give unto thee the keys of heaven," continued Jesus; "and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." The key was the symbol of power, or authority. A scribe was given a key on beginning his duties, to indicate that to him was entrusted the power of opening, or interpreting the law. As a scribe or rabbi rendered decisions in accordance with Jewish law, so Peter would render decisions in accordance with the law of Christ, in accordance with his teaching. "To bind" was a Jewish legal phrase for "to declare forbidden, to prohibit"; and "to loose" was a phrase for "to declare permissible, to permit"; whatever Peter should forbid or allow, would be ratified by God. See Light from Oriental Life. This promise was afterwards made to all the disciples (Matthew 18.18; John 20.23). There is no question of absolving from sin. "He received the power here of laying down the law of Christian conduct. Whosoever, like Peter, grasps firmly the cardinal truths of Christ's nature, and all which flows therefrom, will have his insight so cleared that his judgment on what is permitted or forbidden to a Christian will correspond to the decisions of Heaven" (Alexander Maclaren).

IV. A CAUTION, verse 20. Jesus charged his disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ. Their own erroneous views of what the Christ would do could only make trouble if told to the multitudes, and would hasten the death of Jesus at the hands of the Pharisees and Sadducees. "How long dost thou hold us in suspense?" the latter questioned at the feast of the dedication at Jerusalem. "If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly." But he only told them, "The works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me."

V. THE LAW OF THE CROSS FOR JESUS, verse 21. Before this Jesus had referred to his approaching death (Matthew 9.15; John 2.18-22; 3.14), but from now on he spoke plainly about it, declaring that he must go to Jerusalem, there to be ill-treated by elders and chief priests and scribes, and be put to death. "He must die because he would save. The great 'must' which ruled his life was a cable of two strands—obedience to the Father, and love of men. These haled him to the cross, and fastened him there. This verse covers an indefinite time, during which Jesus gradually spoke about his coming sufferings. Ordinarily we exaggerate the suddenness and therefore the depth of Peter's fall, by supposing it took place immediately after his confession" (Alexander Maclaren).

"And the third day be raised up." "The Evangelists, indeed, write it down in plain language, as fully taught by their later experience, that he was to be rejected by the rulers of Israel, slain, and to rise again the third day. And there can be as little doubt that Christ's language (as afterwards they looked back upon it) must

have clearly implied all this, as that at the time they did not fully understand it. Otherwise they could not afterwards have been in such doubt about his death and resurrection. He was so constantly in the habit of using symbolic language, and had only lately reproved them for taking what he said about 'the leaven' in a literal, which he had meant in a figurative sense, that it was but natural they should have regarded in the same light, announcements which, in their strict literality, would seem to them well-nigh incredible. They could well understand his rejection by the scribes as a sort of figurative death, or violent suppression of his claim and doctrines, and then, after briefest periods, their resurrection as it were, but not those terrible details in their full literalness" (Alfred Edersheim).

VI. A GREAT CONDEMNATION, verses 22, 23. Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him. "God forbid! (be it far from thee) Lord: this shall never be unto thee," he said. Recall the time when the friends of Martin Luther entreated him to stay at home and look out for his own safety instead of going to the Diet at Worms. Peter was playing the tempter's part; the sharp rebuke, "Get thee behind me, Satan," which sprang from the lips of his Lord, shows the intensity of the latter's emotion.

"A vessel filled to the brim with water is apt to spill a little when it is shaken. Peter is so full of human nature that, whenever he is excited or agitated, it seems to overflow, and some word or deed comes out which would be almost childish in its impulsiveness if it were not for the virile force of the great, strong heart behind it. The consequence of this is, that he is more often in trouble, more frequently rebuked and corrected, than any other of the disciples" (Henry van Dyke).

"This world has many Peters, who wish to be wiser than Christ, and to prescribe to him what it is needful to do" (Hofmeister).

"Thou art a stumbling-block unto me; for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." Thou dost not think God's thoughts. "Thou art not, as before, a noble block, lying in the right position as a massive foundation-stone. On the contrary, thou art like a stone quite out of its proper place—lying right across the road in which I must go—lying as a stone of stumbling" (Morrison).

"None are more formidable instruments of temptation than well-meaning friends, who care more for our comfort than for our character" (A. B. Bruce).

VII. THE LAW OF THE CROSS FOR ALL DISCIPLES, verses 24-26. Then Jesus said unto his disciples, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Not only must Jesus himself endure the cross, but Peter (and all true followers) must be ready to deny himself, yield his will to his Master's, and take up his cross, accept the persecutions in store for him, and follow his Master.

"When one sees how little Christian men and women deny themselves for the service of Christ, how feebly the love of Christ controls their lives, one wonders, not so much why they are not consecrated Christians, as why they are Christians at all!" (G. H. Maggregor).

"For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it." The word *life* and the pronoun *it* referring to *life* are used in a twofold sense here. The sentence means: He whose only care is to save his natural life shall lose his spiritual life; and he who is willing to lose his natural life for my sake shall find his spiritual life.

"For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?" "The contrast is not between gaining this world and losing the next; not exactly between acquiring material and sacrificing spiritual interest; but between gaining that which is eternal to oneself and losing one's own character and life in the process. Luke gives it more clearly: 'For what is a man advantaged if he gain the whole world and lose himself, or be cast away?'" (Lyman Abbott).

In these two sentences Jesus sums up what he has been trying to teach his disciples, which they have been so slow to learn. Indeed they never did learn it until after he had been offered up on the cross.

"If I were you, with health and youth in touch,
I would not, for the more, neglect the much" (E. C. Lefroy).

VIII. THE COMING FORETOLD, verses 27, 28.
IX. THE TRANSFIGURATION, 17.1-8.
X. THE CURE OF THE EPILEPTIC BOY, 17.9-21.
XI. THE CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION AGAIN FORETOLD, 8.22, 23.
XII. THE HALF-SHEKEL, 17.24-27.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The keys of the kingdom, verse 19. The key has always been a symbol of power and authority. To "confer a key" meant the bestowing of a position of trust. When a change of government came to a city the keys of its gates were given up to the new rulers in token of their authority. Eastern keys are such long, clumsy affairs that they are often carried slung over the shoulder.

Whatsoever thou shalt bind . . . whatsoever thou shalt loose, verse 19. Every rabbi or scribe received at his ordination, which was by the laying on of hands, the power to bind and to loose, i.e., to decide with authority what was lawful and unlawful to be done, or orthodox and unorthodox to be believed. To bind was to declare unlawful, to loose was to declare lawful. We read, for example, that "Rabbi Meir loosed (i.e., permitted) the mixing of wine and oil, and the anointing of the sick man on the Sabbath", that Rabbi Jochanan said, "They necessarily loose (i.e., permit) saluting on the Sabbath," and "Concerning gathering wood on a feast day, the school of Shammai binds (i.e., forbids) it—the school of Hillel looses (i.e., permits) it." The power, therefore, which Christ here promised to Peter and the other apostles was the power to decide with authority questions of faith and morals in the Christian church—the power to fix the moral standard and to determine the Christian creed.—One Volume Commentary.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The crucifixion is now only a few months off. Jesus had long been teaching his disciples: from their companionship with him had they learned the greatness of their Master? He would test them.

They had gone about thirty miles northeast of Capernaum into the region of Cæsarea Philippi at the base of Mount Hermon, in the Lebanon Range. It was called Cæsarea of Philippi to distinguish it from another Cæsarea on the coast, and also because it was in the province of Philip the Tetrarch, who had done much to render the city beautiful. It is now called Banias, from its other name of Paneas, in honor of the god Pan. It has a magnificent situation 1,100 feet above sea level.

Mt. Hermon and Cæsarea Philippi

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

We never fully know just what our faith is until we state it in words. The disciples had gradually learned to know who their great Teacher was, but they had not fully realized that they knew this until they gave voice to their belief through Peter, their spokesman. Before this, it is possible that they could have been convinced they were following a false gleam: after this, nothing could have turned them from their conviction that they were following the Light of the World. Peter faltered for a moment at the trial of his Master, but later in the face of persecution and martyrdom no disciple ever disowned him. Their faith which they may have held only confusedly in thought, became defined and indelibly held when once it emerged into words. This is the reason why pupils should be given opportunities for voicing their belief.

If pupils cannot answer the all-important question as Peter did, endeavor to have them agree to this covenant (worded by Dr. Torry): "I promise to examine carefully the evidence that the Bible is God's book and Jesus Christ is God's Son and man's Savior, and if I find reason to believe that the book is true and he is man's Savior, I will accept him and confess him before men and undertake to follow him."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
CROSS-BEARING IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Beginning the Lesson

Jesus was called "The Son of God" by John the Baptist (John 1.34), by Andrew when first he met him (John 1.41), by Nathanael (John 1.49), by the disciples after Jesus with Peter had joined them in the boat (Matthew 14.33), and on various occasions by men whom he had cured. Why, then, was this acknowledgment of Peter's which is our theme today regarded as so epoch-making?

If his disciples had not learned to know him, how could they reveal him to the world? And he was depending upon them to do this.

"The lowly origin of the Carpenter, the familiarity of daily intercourse, the shocks of disapproval, the delay of hopes making the heart sick, the haughty repudiation of Jesus by the authorized teachers of Israel, and the ebbing tide of his popularity in Galilee, might have almost justified a fisherman's inability to answer Jesus' momentous question." Peter's confession of faith and loyalty was epoch-making, for it proved that the more than two years of companionship with Jesus had but confirmed the belief which the disciples had first heard expressed by the Baptist; they had attained to a full realization of the content of the term, and it was now their deep conviction that their Master was in truth the Christ, the Son of the living God. On that faith Christ could build his church. (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

The Law of the Cross for the Christ

From that time began Jesus to show unto his disciples that he must go into Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and the third day be raised up. Dr. Gaius Glenn Atkins has this beautiful figure which expresses the way in which this note of coming suffering is introduced into the Gospel records:

A great musician wrote a famous symphony to describe Napoleon's invasion of Russia; it was battle and defeat set to music. He used the Marseillaise, the fighting song of the French, to represent in sound the advance and retreat of the French army. Being a Russian himself, he used the Russian national hymn, with its sad, grave music, to represent the final defeat of Napoleon and the triumph of Russia. And the symphony is really, in a rich variety of musical development, a contention between the two national anthems. As the French march in and are for a time victorious the music of the Marseillaise dominates all the orchestra, and you hear the Russian anthem faint and far away; then through the tumult of the musicians you hear the Russian anthem returning; always with a nobler self-assertion, while in the end it dominates the whole composition and the song of France is silent.

So the note of suffering and the anticipation of Jesus' crucifixion begins to sound through the various music of the Gospels; at first faint and far away, but always more insistent, until at the end there is nothing but the grave, sad music of it, lost finally in the Hallelujah Chorus of the Resurrection.

On Paying the Cost

Who is there among us of today, more than among those early disciples, who acts as though he believed every word and suggestion of the sentences that the Master spoke and that they were great foundation truths and principles for living?

And yet we of today ought to understand these great truths better than the men of Jesus' day understood them, even though they had the advantage of actually listening to his words and looking into his face as he spoke them. We have the advantage of all these centuries of Christian life and teaching and especially of seeing how Jesus' own life upon the earth and the history all through the centuries of the religion that he established illustrate in so many ways the truth of his words. And yet can either you or I say that we have learned it? We may say we have and actually think we have, but our lives have borne a very poor testimony to our faith.

Indeed it is to be feared that there are many in our day who do not even formally hold to the philosophy that the way of denial and sacrifice in a great and worthy cause may be a way of life at all. We hear so much about the way of self-realization and fulfilment being the way of life that the great teaching of Jesus does not have much chance in some quarters. And though we must admit that

there is some point to what these modern teachers tell us, it remains that Jesus, as a Teacher, was much more fundamentally sound than they are. Whether we accept it or not, or live up to its implications or not, it is still true, as Jesus taught it, that whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and the whole history of man's life upon the earth is a proof of it.—The New Outlook.

True Ideas of Self-Denial and Cross-Bearing

The denial of self is not the death of self; it is the leading of the best self into larger life. It is not the dwarfing of the life; it is its development into usefulness. He best denies himself who best develops himself with the purpose of serving his fellows. What Jesus meant was that if any man would be one of his he must cease to make his own selfish pleasures, ambitions, and passions the end of his living; he must make the most of himself that he may have the more to give to the service of mankind; he must make the one motive and end of his life the benefit and help of every other man. That kind of life means a change of center. Instead of regarding the universe as revolving about itself, it sees that self as but part of the great machinery of life, planned and operating for the good of all.

You have only to look at the great Teacher to know what self-denial and cross-bearing really mean, and you have only to follow him to fully carry out their principles. To him they meant the life of doing good, of seeking the sorrowing, befriending the forsaken, helping the helpless. They who follow him lead the world. They who seek to minister instead of being ministered to are the world's masters.

The cross of discipleship will be to some statesmanship, to others science, to others the daily service of a home or the work in the shop; it is the kindly word, the cheering look, the lift by the way; it is whatever is done in unselfish desire to make life better, to bring men nearer to one another and to the Father of all.—Henry F. Cope, in Levels of Living.

The Soul is Essential to the Enjoyment of the World

Mark Hopkins once put the matter to his class in this way: "You would like to have the world, as much of it, at least, as you want. Would you be willing to have the world, all of it that you want, and be deaf? Perhaps you would. Would you be willing to have the world, all of it that you want, and be deaf and dumb? Perhaps you would. Would you be willing to have the world, all of it you want, and be deaf and dumb and blind? Perhaps you would, but I doubt it: for the time comes in such a reckoning when you must face the issue of being or having."

And yet we are in danger of forgetting that it is the soul in us which makes the world desirable. When that is reduced, the world is reduced; when that is gone, the world is gone. The parable of our Lord spoken to this point has its constant illustration before our eyes. Some one who has been putting this principle of exchange into practice reaches the time when he can pull down his barns and build greater, and then begins to say to his soul: Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry. But the soul answers him not a word. It is dumb and dead. And the man goes about among his possessions, solitary and empty. The world looks on in pity or contempt, and says that he has overdone the matter. At what point in the process of this exchange of his soul for the world did he begin to overdo the matter?—W. J. Tucker, in Personal Power.

A Law that is Applicable to Churches

The principle which Jesus enunciated about the losing and the saving of life may apply to institutions, even to churches, as truly as to individuals, and institutional selfishness even in the interest of so good an institution as a church falls under the same condemnation as individual selfishness. Occasionally a church finds itself in a position where there is reasonable ground to believe that the Kingdom of God will be more effectively advanced by its dissolution or merging than it could by the continuance of its separate existence. Such a situation was confronted by a church in Hartford, Conn. Its congregation had occupied a district in which it was able to serve as a unifying bond for the community to whose religious needs it ministered. The organization of another church in the community, which would have broken the existing unity, gave rise to a proposal to the new group to join with the existing church. "But we also want you to know that we are so concerned for unity that, should you not accept our invitation and should you decide to build a church in this district, we propose to disband our church and urge all our members

to join with you rather than see the work of the Kingdom of God hindered by the existence here of too many churches." It is the spirit of this action which calls for commendation. It is an authentic act of sacrifice in reliance upon the promise that "he that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."—The Christian Century.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Faith begins as experiment and ends as experience.—J. H. Jowett.

2. The supremacy of the Christ. See Chapter XI of A. B. Bruce's The Training of the Twelve; Pages 298-308 of Paterson-Smyth's People's Life of Christ.

3. The law of the cross. See Chapter XII of A. B. Bruce's The Training of the Twelve.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What did Jesus mean by his words in verse 3? 2. What did Jesus mean by saying "to such belongeth the Kingdom"? 3. Tell the story which Jesus told to show how much he cared for every child. 4. What is our special lesson topic, and how is it appropriate for our text? 5. If you have belonged to the Kingdom of God since you were a little child, what have you been doing in that Kingdom?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

DENYING SELF FOR CHRIST

Beginning the Lesson

At the time when all Europe was afire with enthusiasm for Napoleon and his wonderful exploits, Beethoven dedicated his Symphony No. Three to him. Months passed, and Napoleon stepped down in disgrace from the pedestal on which the people had enthroned him, and then Beethoven destroyed his dedication, exclaiming, "So this one, too, is nothing more than an ordinary man!" Peter and James and John and the rest began to follow Jesus in the belief that he was no ordinary man. They lived with him, shared his daily life and daily thoughts, and the wonder of that life grew upon them. Never did they exclaim, "So this One, too, is nothing more than an ordinary man!" His life among them from day to day only deepened their early conviction. But had they grasped the great truth of his divinity? Jesus would have them make an avowal of their belief. (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

Denying Self for What?

Every art, science, feat of skill, and enterprise on earth, says that one must deny himself to attain the goal sought. This thought Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick illustrates thus, in words which are here slightly changed:

"So Paul at the Greek games saw men who would not have guided so unerringly their swerving chariots, so tirelessly have run their races and sustained their combats, if with unwearying self-denial they had not disciplined themselves. And the apostle went back to his own self-denying life with the figures of the athletes in his thought, and said: 'They do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we, an incorruptible.'

"Consider the self-denial of acrobats. To children they are like automata, nimble in action, marvelous in skill. But older folk think of the discipline that lies behind the precision of their feats. They have guarded their bodies by self-restraint and hardened them by exercise; they have risked life to learn new exploits.

"Consider the explorers. What rigor of the northern cold, what exile from the comforts of home, what sustained and perilous self-denial did Peary undergo that he might be the discoverer of the North Pole!

"Self-denial is no special property of Christian service. It is an elemental law of life. What we call self-denial is the necessary price we pay for things on which our hearts are set."

They do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we, an incorruptible. And the crown which we seek to obtain when we deny ourselves as Christ bids us do, is to make of ourselves true followers of the Christ, the Son of the living God. "If one is not a Christian," well says Dr. John R. Mott, "he may debate whether or not he will become a Christian; but having once become a Christian, there is no longer room for discussion as to whether Jesus Christ shall dominate him."

The Christian who follows Christ as Lord, must deny self, give up his own will

and let Christ's will dominate his life. There may be a practice of self-denial which is far from being a denial of self. Self-denial may be easy, denial of self is difficult. "For disciples of Jesus, being what they are, it cannot be easy to do God's will; because their thoughts are not God's thoughts, nor their ways his ways. Accordingly, they have to give up their own thoughts, ways and wills. But what are a man's thoughts, ways and wills but himself? So that he has to give up himself."

"What am I better for having Christ as my acknowledged Lord?" questions Dr. G. H. Knight. What is he better for having me as his acknowledged disciple? let us ask ourselves.

Whosoever Would Save his Life Shall Lose it

Not very long ago the story came out of a man who was so lazy that he had not left his bed for very many years. There was nothing the matter with him. He just said he was not going to do any work. His wife had to keep him, though I think it was a pity she did. I suppose he thought he was having a fine time. He was not spending any strength; he was not taking any trouble. Perhaps he thought he was keeping his life from being exhausted. But, boys and girls who run and jump and tire yourselves out, would you call it life to stay in bed for twenty years, not seeing anything outside the room, with all the muscles of your legs and arms flabby, and your mind flabbier still? Of course you would not. It is just the using up of the muscle you have that brings on the bigger muscle still. It is getting out of the narrow room and seeing what is in the larger world outside that helps your minds to grow.

The same is true of all your life. It is a poor thing as long as it is all within your own skin. It is not really worth keeping. There was once a man who excused himself for a piece of cowardice when he might have been brave by saying, "I would rather be a coward for half an hour than a dead man all the rest of my life." But the brave part of him was actually dead for the rest of his life, unless something changed him. It is not worth while going on as a coward, a liar, a cheat, a mean, selfish clod.—Will Reason, in What Jesus Said.

Whosoever Shall Lose his Life for My Sake Shall Find it

I want you to notice that Jesus does not say that *all* ways of losing life bring it to us in greater fullness. He says, "Whosoever will lose his life *for my sake.*" Some people have tried to lose some of their life for their own sake, and that is quite a different thing. It is of no use flogging yourself to make yourself happier. The pain that brings the greater joy is that which you willingly undergo for some one higher than yourself, and Jesus is the highest of all. What he wants us to do is always the best; it is what will work out God's will. That was what Jesus was always doing himself. He gave his own life, you know. Everything that is true or right or loving is really for his sake.

Don't you believe that giving up is best? Think of the most selfish person you know, and then think of the one who is most unselfish. The one always wants to save his skin, his money, his comfort, and to get his own way. Is he the strongest, the wisest, or even the most happy? The other takes trouble, spends his money and himself for the general good; for what he believes to be God's will. Is he miserable and wretched? Not at all. Even in this rough-and-tumble world we can see the larger and more beautiful life growing inside the one who lets self go.—Will Reason, in What Jesus Said.

Sentence Sermons

Every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.—Paul.

Self-denial is the secret of self-development.—W. L. Watkinson.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. How were the disciples to turn and become as little children? 2. In what ways is a little child a true symbol of a disciple? 3. What is meant by causing one of the little ones to stumble? 4. How important is it for a child to receive the right training in its earliest years? 5. What is the condition in your community as regards child labor? 6. Do children receive the right consideration and care in your church and church school? 7. What improvements could be made?

LESSON II—APRIL 13

THE CHILD AND THE KINGDOM

GOLDEN TEXT: Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for to such belongeth the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 19.14

LESSON Matthew 18.1-14; 19.13-15 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 24.1-6

MATTHEW 18.1 In that hour came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven? 2 And he called to him a little child, and set him in the midst of them, 3 and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me: 6 but whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and *that* he should be sunk in the depth of the sea.

12 How think ye? if any man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and go unto the mountains, and seek that which goeth astray? 13 And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth over it more than over the ninety and nine which have not gone astray. 14 Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

19.13 Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should lay his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. 14 But Jesus said, Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for to such belongeth the kingdom of heaven. 15 And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS ENTERED BY THE CHILDLIKE, 18.1-4. "In that hour": see The Historical Background. In answer to the disciples' question, "Who, then, is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" Jesus called to him a little child (possibly Peter's, if they were in Peter's house at Capernaum at the time), and putting him in the midst of the disciples said, "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." The double Greek negative in the last clause is most emphatic: far from being the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, they were in danger of never even entering it. They must turn from their wrong ambition and jealousy, and become unpretentious, humble as little children. A child has no thought about greatness. "Jesus does not say that the childlike spirit is inherently better than the spirit of the man. He does not promise that it shall possess or govern the Kingdom. He affirms only that it is the condition of entering the Kingdom. It is not that the child is better than the man, but that the child stands at the gate of the ideal and takes the first step toward the Christian character. Docility, receptivity, open-mindedness, the eager, listening spirit of the little child—this is the polar opposite of the unteachable, satiated, closed heart of the Pharisee, and as the latter blocks the way to the Kingdom, so the former opens it. Better things than childhood has to offer are to be gained through the discipline and stress of life, yet entrance to the Kingdom is attained by no other door than the unspoiled, natural, spontaneous spirit of the child, and many a sophisticated and unteachable life will find a shock of surprise that it has lost the key" (F. G. Peabody).

"Life is like a tower with a spiral staircase, a door at the foot, and a window at the top. You enter at the door of childhood and begin the ascent of life, and it is sometimes dark about you, so that you have to grope your way. At last you come to the top and look out from the window of maturity, and to your surprise it is the same view which you saw as you entered childhood's door. The winding stair has brought you round to the same outlook, but the horizon is far wider than you could see below. You have not descended into childishness; you have ascended into childlikeness. You have been converted; that is to say, you have turned round, as you ascended the spiral stair, and as you look out over the broader view, close at your feet are the fearlessness, simplicity, and love of the little child" (F. G. Peabody).

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as a little child, the same is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven."

"It is easy to humble one's self by disparaging words, or by symbolic acts —as when the Egyptian monks wore hoods like children's caps—but to be humble in spirit, and therefore childlike! The really humble man is as great in the moral world as he is rare" (A. B. Bruce).

II. WE HONOR CHRIST BY HONORING THOSE WHO ARE CHILDLIKE, 18.5. "And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name (for my sake) receiveth me." "The reception required does not mean natural kindness to children (though that also Christ valued), but esteeming them as fellow-disciples in spite of their insignificance. A child may *be* such a disciple, but it may also *represent* such a disciple, and it is its representative function that is to be emphasized here. The transition of thought from *being* like a child to receiving all that of which childhood in its weakness is the emblem, was perfectly natural; for there is a close connection between the selfish struggle to be great and an offensive mode of acting toward the little" (A. B. Bruce).

"Let us join our hands together,
Form a league of love and friendship,
Form a league to help the weak ones.
We shall make a nation greater
Than the greatest of old nations,
Than the greatest of the present."

III. CONDEMNATION OF HARSH TREATMENT OF THE CHILDLIKE, 18.6, 7. One of these little ones that believe on Christ, not merely his child follower, but also his immature follower, a man may cause to stumble, may lead into unbelief; the Greek verb *skandalise,* translated in the R. V. *cause to stumble* and in the A. V. *offend,* is the verb from which our word *scandal* is derived, which means literally *a snare laid for an enemy,* for the Greek noun *skandalon, occasion of stumbling,* verse 7, is the name of the upright stick in a trap on which the bait is fastened, which, when touched by an animal, causes the trap to close over it. "Offences are traps to entice and betray unwary disciples; they are stumbling-blocks laid in the path that leads to Christ and heaven, in order to make those who would follow Christ lose their way." For such a man, Jesus says it is profitable that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea, "and it is implied, though not expressed, that it is what he gets when divine vengeance at length overtakes him." There were two kinds of millstones in use in Palestine: the small hand-mill found in every home, and turned by women; and the large one so heavy that it was turned by an ass or an ox. "'Let such a large stone be hung about the neck of the offender to make sure that he sink to the bottom to rise no more'—such is the thought of Jesus; strong in conception and expression, revealing intense abhorrence" (Bruce).

"When men, in their lust for dominion,
Their madness for silver and gold,
Crush the beauty and charm from that spirit,
Make the flower-face withered and old,
Bind the hands and the feet with a tether
That childhood can never untie,
Deem not that Jehovah all heeding
Looks down from the heights of the sky"
(Margaret E. Sangster).

IV. DIVINE INTEREST IN THE LITTLE ONES, 18.10.

"Nations have perished for want of reverence for little children, whereas to love them, to serve them, is the most Godlike attribute of mankind" (Cardinal Gibbon).

V. THE INTRINSIC VALUE OF THE INDIVIDUAL SOUL, 18.12-14. "How think ye?" asked Jesus as he gave them the parable of the Good Shepherd. The shepherd with a hundred sheep will leave the ninety-nine and search for the one that has gone astray, and great will be his rejoicing when he finds it. The size of God's family does not affect the value to him of each individual member.

"God means to care for each soul separately, as though there were no other on earth beside" (Martin Luther).

"Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." "This was wonderful teaching, then heard for the first time. Every man, because he is a man, belongs to the divine household and is entitled to its care, protection, comfort and joy. If he wanders away into barren, unhealthy, dangerous places, God is interested in bringing him back, because he is a man and has the making of a man in him."

VI. JESUS BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN, 19.13-15. In the midst of important lessons which Jesus was giving his followers (Mt. 18.15 to 19.12), mothers brought their little children to him to bless, and the disciples rebuked them. "The Greek word translated 'rebuked' means that they chided, scolded, them for their forwardness and presumption in intruding themselves upon their Master's notice" (Samuel Cox). But Jesus bade them permit the children to come to him: "for to such belongeth the Kingdom of Heaven," he added. To children and to those who possess many characteristics of childhood, who are childlike believers, the Kingdom belongs. And he blessed them.

"Of such the Kingdom!—teach thou us
O Master most divine,
To feel the deep significance
Of these wise words of thine!" (Whittier).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

He should be sunk in the depth of the sea, 18.6. Punishment by drowning was a practise of Romans, Greeks, and Syrians.

The hell of fire, 18.9. *Hell* is *Gehenna,* the Greek word for the Valley of Hinnom, the ravine on the south side of Jerusalem which was sometimes called Tophet, whence our expression "as hot as Tophet." In the reigns of Ahaz and Manasseh children were offered here in sacrifice to the god Molech. King Josiah had human bones thrown here, thus making it ceremoniously unclean, and later the refuse of the city was thrown into it, and this necessitated keeping fires constantly burning to consume it. Therefore it gave its name to the place of future punishment, spoken of as having its fire never quenched.

If any man have a hundred sheep, 18.12. I do not remember ever to have seen in the East a flock of sheep without a shepherd. In such a landscape as Judea, where pasture is thinly scattered over an unfenced tract of country, covered with delusive paths, still frequented by the wild beasts, and rolling off into the desert, the man and his character are indispensable. On some high moor, across which at night the hyenas howl, when you meet him, sleepless, far-sighted, weather-beaten, armed, leaning on his staff, and looking out over his scattered sheep, every one of them on his heart, you understand why Christ took him as the type of self-sacrifice.—George Adam Smith, in The Historical Geography of the Holy Land.

Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should lay his hands on them, 19.13. At Askelon I had gone into a house to see some antiques which were offered for sale, and had left outside my young daughter with a native servant. Hearing an unusual commotion I hastened out and found the whole female population of the place with their babes crowding round my daughter, while my servant was vehemently gesticulating and brandishing a stick to keep off the crowd. As soon as I ascertained the cause of the excitement I rebuked my man (who with true oriental pride esteemed it a degradation for an English lady to recognize a poor Fellahin), and my daughter gladly complied with their wishes. They had never seen a western woman before, for Askelon is quite out of the tourist's route, and wonder-stricken by the sight of the fair-skinned, light-haired, smiling girl perfectly at home on her side-saddle, another wonder for them, they were sure that her touch would bring blessing to their little ones. When she began by taking a babe in her arms and kissing it, they explained that there was no need for that, that a touch of her finger was quite enough. The babes were touched on the cheek and the little toddling ones on the head. The ceremony ended, we rode off amid the blessings and grateful looks of these simple women. Where could we have found or seen a more vivid illustration of the Gospel narrative? They brought the young children to him that he should touch them and his disciples rebuked those that brought them.—Tristram's Eastern Customs in Bible Lands.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

"In that hour," so Matthew begins his account of the coming of the disciples to Jesus with their question about greatness in the Kingdom of Heaven. What "the hour" was we learn from Mark's Gospel. There had been a discussion on the way back to Capernaum as to who was the greatest (Mark 9.33, 37). The praise of Peter for his expression of his belief in the divinity of their Master (our last lesson) and the taking of the three chosen disciples up the Mount of Transfiguration had evidently aroused jealousy among them. Still retaining their Jewish expectancy of an earthly kingdom over which Jesus would rule, despite his teaching about the Kingdom of Heaven, and certain now of its immediate coming, the ambition of each to have the pre-eminence was aroused. Jesus began by laying down the condition of even entering the Kingdom, the duty of his followers to all lowly ones, and then by his parable taught them God's love for even the lost.

The blessing of the little children, 19.13-15, took place when Jesus had left Galilee for Perea on his way to Jerusalem for the last time. Because connected in thought, the two incidents form our lesson today.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Jesus took a little child and set him in the midst of the disciples while he talked to them about humility, and he held the child in his arms while he talked to them about receiving children in his name. His words must have made a deeper impression upon them than they would had not Jesus by his loving clasp of the little one impressed them with his own great love for children, and whenever afterward they saw a little child in his parent's arms they must have been reminded of this act and these words of their Great Teacher.

That object lessons are impressive for young pupils all teachers know, but all teachers do not so often realize their force for the adult mind. No amount of printed information about our navy and the call for volunteers had such a result as that assembly of the great fleet of war-vessels in New York harbor. That object lesson brought a rush of applications for enlistment in the navy.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE SIN OF NEGLECTING AND MISGUIDING CHILDREN

Beginning the Lesson

There is a well-known picture of a crowded street in London across which a little toddler is passing. A policeman stands with his hands raised, and, obedient to his command, as if struck motionless by a magician's wand, all the carriages, omnibuses, and other vehicles have stopped to allow the child to pass. "His Majesty the Baby" is the title of the picture: "Their Majesties the Little Children," might be the title of the picture which we have today from Matthew's Gospel.

Become as Little Children

The Master demands the very best we have—the childlike qualities of teachableness and faith. It is an inexorable condition that we bring these. On the sunny side of ten there is an atmosphere of trust. Have you ever thought of how much of the glory of childhood comes from the unruffled calm of its trust? The child's world is a garden of delight because its boundless trust makes everything in it bloom as a spring day touches a valley and calls forth its beauty. Unsophisticated credulity is a childish thing, to be put away when one becomes a man. But a childlike trust is part of our permanent inheritance as joint heirs of Jesus Christ. "He careth for you." "He knoweth our frame." "He knoweth the way that I take." "He knoweth you have need of these things." A doctor told a student who complained of headaches and whose window looked off into empty space that he needed something in his view to "lean his eyes up against." It is a good thing to lean our eyes up against the background of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The child lives in the present. To a child on a picnic there has been no yesterday; there will be no tomorrow. "One crowded hour of glorious life" is his. He is unvexed by past regrets or future fears, while we, his elders, live so largely in the day before yesterday or the middle of next week. The Christian who is persuaded that he is able to keep that which he has committed unto him, may live as fully in the present as most carefree children.

On the sunny side of ten we live in an ideal world. The world is full, then, of ideal personages and ideal forces. And the man of Christian faith, to whom God and the increasing purpose which runs through the ages are realities, lives in an ideal world. Creation to him is not a dreary mechanism of interlocked wheels, for the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. His Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and its members have the dew of their youth.—Condensed from Fares, Please! by Halford E. Luccock.

The Sin of Mistreating Children

A Christian worker visited a poor woman who was very ill. "There is nothing you can do for me," the woman told her, "but if you will do something for that poor child on the other side of the partition, you will be helping me." The child was screaming with pain, and blow after blow could be heard. It was a daily occurrence, the sick woman said. The Christian worker went to the courts, but was told that no one could interfere between parent and child. She went to the charitable institutions, only to learn that they could do nothing without an order from the courts. At last in despair she applied to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "If that little girl cannot receive humane treatment as a human being, she shall have it as a member of the animal kingdom," declared the tender-hearted officer, and he at once sent a man to investigate. Beating down the door in that cellar which answered as a "home," he found the little girl lying bruised and bleeding, and wrapping her in a horse-blanket, he brought her before that court where the persistent Christian worker had applied for help in vain. Strong men turned away their heads and wept, as they looked upon little Mary Ellen after the officer had laid her down in their midst. Then was organized the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and now our courts protect children from inhuman parents. Our Children's Courts, Big Brothers, and Big Sisters, are the great life-saving agencies for the little children whom Jesus loves.

What is your community doing to decrease its infant mortality, to see that none of the children are under-nourished, to secure proper medical examination and care for those whose parents are unable to do this, to give them instruction in the laws of health and personal hygiene, to afford ample and well-equipped playgrounds?

The Sin of Neglected Children

In one of the Child Welfare Exhibits held in New York these lines of Stevenson's were hung upon the wall:

Happy hearts and happy faces,
Happy play in grassy places—
This is how, in ancient ages,
Children grew to Kings and sages.

Beneath these lines was a photograph of children playing in a gutter. For multitudes of children in New York the hard streets must serve as "grassy places." There is an army of children from three to six years old, 200,000 it is estimated, in New York city alone. The kindergartens of the public schools and the private schools and charitable institutions care for one-fourth of the number. A third of the remainder receive suitable care in their own homes. But one hundred thousand, it is estimated, are spending their early years in the streets.

A New York scrubwoman, the only breadwinner for five young children, uttered a profound truth when she appeared before a judge to plead for a wayward boy. "A little boy could not possibly be good all the time," she cried, "when he had nobody to look after him most of the time." And a worker for the Kindergarten Association pertinently asks: "How can the little children whose fathers are dead, and whose mothers go out to work; those whose mothers are dead, and whose fathers are away every day at work; the orphans; those whose parents wilfully neglect them; those whose parents are too ignorant to take care of them; and all those who for one reason or another—poverty, overcrowded homes, degraded or helpless parents—are cast adrift in the streets of this city to learn their own lesson of life—how can they reasonably be expected to be good? The answer is, they cannot. And the direct result is the sad procession of little children and older brothers and sisters passing through the criminal courts."

The Sin of Misguiding Children

An English nobleman called at the famous Wedgwood pottery factories, and with the owner and a lad of fifteen was shown about the place. The nobleman enter-

tained them with witty talk, with which he wove much "polite profanity" and many jests on sacred names and subjects. The lad laughed heartily at all he said. At the close of their trip around, Mr. Wedgwood dismissed the boy, and held out to the peer a beautiful vase of unique pattern, and as the latter was about to take it, the owner let it fall to the floor, where it broke into fragments. The nobleman uttered an angry oath, and upbraided Mr. Wedgwood for his clumsiness, for he had decided to take it for his collection. The Youth's Companion gives Mr. Wedgwood's answer:

"My lord, there are other ruined things, more precious than this, which can never be restored. You can never give back to the soul of that boy who has just left us the reverent feeling and simple faith which you have destroyed by making light of the religion which has been his most sacred memory and inheritance. For years his parents have endeavored to teach him reverence for sacred things, and so to influence his mind that his life and conduct should be governed by religious principles. You have undone their labor in less than half an hour."

Little Children of the Near East

In a forceful temperance sermon preached in England the prophecy was made that unless something is done there will be a fearful crop of drunkards from the moderate drinking of the young people of our time when they arrive at middle age. And in our land, in face of the widespread example of moderate drinking, there is need of strong and persistent abstinence teaching.

Dr. Alexander McKenzie, a noted preacher of Cambridge, Massachusetts, used to tell a story of his boyhood. His father was a sea captain, and after a three-year voyage his ship was sighted in Boston Harbor. The customs officer knew the lad and permitted him to go down in the boat and meet his father's ship. The captain was on deck giving orders as the boat drew alongside, and the boy eagerly waved his cap to him. At once his father recognized him, although the three years had added much to his height, and cried out, "Throw a rope to my boy." In a moment the boy was on deck and in his father's arms. Those words the lad never forgot, and in after years they seemed to him like his Heavenly Father's orders, directing him to help some other boy upward. Throw a rope to the boy or girl in danger of falling into the habit of drinking intoxicating liquor.

Woe unto the world because of occasions of stumbling! Woe to that man through whom the occasion cometh! That man may be the playwright or the cartoonist who makes boys and girls think it "smart" to drink liquor, the novelist who sprinkles his pages with whiskies and sodas so that young people follow suit lest they be thought "old fogies," even the parents who have liquor in their homes and set the example of "moderate drinking."

See that ye despise not one of these little ones. Remember, too, that Christ's little ones are not only the children; they are also your weaker brothers and sisters. Tempt them not with temptations that may be for them overwhelming.

The Sin of Child Labor

Child labor has been defined as the working of children under conditions that interfere with the physical development, education and opportunities for recreation which children require.

Its abolition involves the prohibition of gainful employment for children under sixteen. The establishment of an eight-hour day and the forbidding of night work

for children of that age are part of the constructive program of The National Child Labor Committee. It purposes educational advantages for the rising generation, especially those who are unprivileged and so need to be lifted to a level of self-sustaining efficiency in the future.

In fourteen states children under fourteen may still be legally employed in factories, at least out of school hours. In eleven states they are permitted to work nine to eleven hours a day. In seventeen states a physician's certificate is not required before a child starts work. In nineteen states not even a sixth-grade education is required. In twenty-eight states children of fourteen may work around explosives; in twenty-two they may run elevators; in seventeen they may oil and clean machinery in motion.

As I set down these facts connected with child labor in this prosperous land I recall that since the World War Germany has begun to develop scientifically her childhood and youth upon an unparalleled scale of physical competence. This policy is practised by a nation deprived of rich territories and heavily burdened with debt. Germany is too intelligent to allow any encumbrances to interfere with the protection of their seed corn. What of the United States?—From an answer to a Letter in the New York Tribune, by S. Parkes Cadman.

Junior Atheists

Do you know that there is "The Junior Atheist League: for Boys and Girls from Seven to Seventeen"? A circular of the League, which comes from the Association for the Advancement of Atheism, declares as follows:

"The League will remove boys and girls from the evil influence of the clergy. It will encourage them to protest against Bible reading and religious worship in public schools and agitate against religious instruction during school hours.

"Dispelling the illusion of immortality, the League will free sons and daughters from the fear of hell and the hope of heaven. Sacrifice for post-mortem considerations will be shown to be criminal folly.

"The increasing number of atheists, with the consequent demand for trained workers, makes the League a necessity. Locals will be formed wherever an organizer can be secured. Four members will be recognized as a local. Stress will be laid on forming branches in high schools, as these will prepare students to serve as organizers of Damned Souls societies during college years, and for effective work thereafter in combating the church.

"A comprehensive program has been arranged. Picnics and outings, clean and healthful good times, will take the place of stultifying Sunday schools. Fellowship and solidarity will be promoted among members and friendships made for the future. Science classes and essay contests will be held. A special course for those over twelve years of age will be given in public speaking by a man who has been called one of the few great orators of the century. Monthly lessons will be mailed. Educators in the A.A.A. will supervise the instruction. Morality based on the findings of modern science will supersede belief based on the speculations of ancient, Asiatic theology."

The New York Christian Advocate prints the information just given and wisely comments: "It behooves Christian people to be on their guard, and to strengthen every agency of religious education in home and school and church, so as to implant such faith and conviction in the minds of young people that this Godless Junior League may find no entrance there. . . . To oppose such an organization by a counterblast is futile. It only advertises it and helps its propaganda. The only effective way for the Christian to combat atheistic propaganda is continually to practise the presence of God. The arguments against the existence of God fall powerless before a godly life."

Relating our Nation's Sins to Childhood

No really human heart can contemplate the wonders and the perils of childhood and then live in disregard of God. Even Huxley conceded the domestic claim for religious education in the home, and Mrs. Huxley triumphed when he acceded to her request that religion should be included in the curriculum of their children.

Our nation's sins would vanish if we dared to relate them to the children. Inherited evils ought to be no part of a child's heritage. We shall cease to fool with slumdom when we feel the shame of childbirth there. We need a greater, deeper fear of irreligion. One of our great thinkers has said that irreligion has to

be judged by its second generation. Any indifference about the children's attendance at Church school and its equivalent—and there are many substitutes that are not equivalents—needs the closest scrutiny. The fear of irreligion should be deep-seated in our nation. It is our supreme task to ask of men and women that they will walk the way of honor for the children's sake. Think what it would mean for our children if only they knew that we saw them through the eyes of Christ, and prayed in his spirit, "For their sakes we consecrate ourselves."—S. W. Hughes.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. What is your community doing to decrease infant mortality? To secure proper medical examination and care for children whose parents are unable to do this? To afford ample and well-equipped playgrounds?

2. Dangers that surround childhood today and the progress of child legislation. See Chapters I and II of The Religious Education of an American Citizen, by Francis G. Peabody ($1.50).

3. Christ and the child. See Chapter XIV of The Training of the Twelve, by A. B. Bruce.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

For the Lesson About Forgiveness. 1. For what does "seventy times seven" stand? 2. In the parable, what do the ten thousand talents on the one hand and the one hundred shillings on the other symbolize? 3. What was the law of Moses in regard to the selling of a debtor? (Ex. 22.3.) 4. What does Paul say about forgiveness in Ephesians 4.31, 32; Colossians 3.12-14? 5. What does forgiveness include? 5. What kind of person finds it difficult to forgive? 7. Have you an implacable spirit?

For the Easter Lesson. 1. Why was John convinced by what he saw at the tomb? 2. What testimony to the resurrection of Christ is borne by Peter in The Acts? 3. Which of these reasons for belief in the resurrection of Christ is the most convincing proof to you: the accounts in the Gospels; the change in the disciples; the conviction of the early church; the history of Christendom; the life of Jesus in the soul of his followers today?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

GROWING IN THE KINGDOM

Beginning the Lesson

You have been told to look up to your parents and copy them, be like them. You have been told to be like some great man or woman, a great hero, a great scholar, a true Christian. But did you ever hear a grown-up told to be like a child? That would sound strange, would it not? And yet that is just what Jesus told his disciples one day. What question of theirs led to this counsel? What object lesson did Jesus use to enforce his words?

Did Jesus mean that they must be child-like, or must be childish? Does childlikeness mean the same thing as childishness? Is childishness an admirable quality in a grown-up? What qualities have children which are admirable in older people? (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

Become as Little Children

My friend is a nose-and-throat specialist, and one day a little girl was brought to his clinic for a small operation on her nose. For some reason he could not give her any anæsthetic; so he took a fifty-cent-piece out of his pocket and put it into her hand.

"That's for you to spend exactly as you like as soon as this is over," he said cheerily. "I'm going to hurt you a little, I'm afraid, but if you'll take a very good look at the fifty cents before I begin, and then hold it tight in your hand and keep thinking of what you saw all the time while I'm at work, it won't hurt nearly so much."

The child went through the operation unusually well, and the doctor congratulated himself on his bright idea. "You're a very brave little girl," he said, patting her on the head, "and pretty soon you can go out and spend your money. Tell me all the things you thought of while I was at work."

"I thought of the words," said the little girl.

"The words?" repeated the doctor. "The date, you mean?" It was so long since he had really noticed a coin that he hardly remembered that coins had any words on them.

"Why, no! Those are numbers. I mean the words at the top, 'In God We Trust,'" said the girl quite simply. "It was the first half dollar I ever had, so I never saw them before, but it's lovely to have them there. So the folks that have half dollars can always think about that."

Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom of Heaven really means your Father's kingdom. But to see it as your Father's kingdom, your Father's world, you must have the loving, trustful eyes of your Father's child.—The Youth's Companion.

Growing in the Kingdom

"Lord, help Kathleen to love Jesus," a father prayed at morning prayers one day, and the little girl exclaimed: "You mustn't say, 'Help Kathleen to love Jesus' because I do love him." And then when her father altered his prayer and said, "Help Kathleen to love Jesus more and more," she nodded approvingly and whispered, "That'll do."

Jesus loves little children, and little children who know about Jesus love him in return. That children belong to him, are members of the Kingdom of God, and should grow up in that Kingdom is the teaching of our lesson.

Children do not remain children, and it would be very sad indeed if they did. A woman died in Bavaria at the age of twenty-eight years who was still lying in the same crib in which she had been put as a babe. She never grew physically at all, although her mental powers developed normally. How strange it must have seemed to hear a babe talking like an adult, and how dreadful a life was hers! Fortunately one does not often hear of such a case. But does one not know of children who have never grown spiritually? You have heard the story of the little boy who fell out of bed and gave as the reason that he stayed too close to "the gettin' in place." There is danger in staying too close to one's entrance into the Kingdom of God. Jesus claims all children as his, and he wants them to remain his and advance as he himself did, in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

"Very early," said Margaret Fuller, "I perceived that the object of life is to grow" —physically, mentally, spiritually. Growth is the law of all life, the Christian life included.

The Ministry of Children in the Church

The Church should have the help of the ministry of the children. The mere presence of children in a church service is to many people a tonic. I heard a woman say only this week in discussing this very matter, "To see that row of boys on the front pew every Sunday is to me a real inspiration." I have often had occasion to notice the influence exerted by a boy or girl who sits with parents throughout the service. People speak commendably of it. If their experience is like unto mine, it recalls the days when they as children sat with their parents, and (many opinions to the contrary of some people) found it not irksome. I may not always have found it the pleasantest thing I wished to do. But that attitude, I find, cannot be said to be peculiar to that particular experience. All ministry has its price. It is a price that children are usually willing to pay. Only occasionally is it a price which they ought not to pay.—Fred Smith, in The New Outlook.

Sentence Sermon

"Friend of children, go thou with me,
All along the way;
Comfort, lead me, bless and keep me,
When I go or stay."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

For the Easter Lesson. 1. Where was Jesus buried? 2. Who was Mary Magdalene? (Luke 8.2; 23.49, 55; 24.1-10.) 3. How was she convinced that Christ had arisen? 4. How were Peter and John convinced of the resurrection of Christ? 5. What other reasons have we for believing that Jesus arose from the dead? 6. What does his resurrection mean to you?

LESSON III—APRIL 20

JESUS TEACHING FORGIVENESS

GOLDEN TEXT: Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. Matthew 6.12

LESSON Matthew 18.15-35 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 32.1-7

MATTHEW 18.21 Then came Peter and said to him, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times? 22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven. 23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, who would make a reckoning with his servants. 24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, that owed him ten thousand talents. 25 But forasmuch as he had not *wherewith* to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 27 And the lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. 28 But that servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, who owed him a hundred shillings: and he laid hold on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owest. 29 So his fellow-servant fell down and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee. 30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay that which was due. 31 So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were exceeding sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. 32 Then his lord called him unto him, and saith to him, Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou besoughtest me: 33 shouldest not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee? 34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due. 35 So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. HOW TO TREAT OFFENDERS, verses 15-20. Jesus' parable about the Good Shepherd, illustrating his care for those who go astray (our last lesson), is followed in Matthew's Gospel by his counsel in regard to man's treatment of offenders. He advised his disciples first to tell the offender of his fault, then to rebuke him in the presence of two or three others, and then, if he still gave no heed to their words, to tell his offense to the Church. "When two or three are gathered in my name," he added, "there am I in the midst of them."

"The more common way is to tell all the neighbors, or the boarding house, or the newspapers" (C. R. Brown).

II. UNLIMITED FORGIVENESS, verses 21, 22. Peter's question about forgiveness of offenders naturally followed: "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times?" Seven denoted the perfect number. Peter's heart glowed with self-complacency, for was he not ready to go much farther in forgiveness than the ordinary man? Did not the Talmud say: "When a man sins against another, that other forgives him once, he forgives him a second time, he forgives him a third time, but the fourth time he does not forgive him"? "No, I tell you," Jesus answered, "not until seven times, but times without number, until seventy times seven." Magnanimity is not calculating, there is no place for arithmetic in the grace of forgiveness, or, as Dr. Jowett poetically says, "forgive to a number where the scaling power of arithmetic retires with wearied wing."

Peter himself was an illustration of the grace of unwearied forgiveness. He sinned and sinned and sinned again. Dr. J. D. Jones fancies Peter after Christ's death saying to himself, "O to grace, how great a debtor, daily I'm constrained to be," and again and again taking himself as a text and preaching a sermon of comfort and hope to downcast and despairing souls.

"O Man! forgive thy mortal foe,
Nor ever strike him blow for blow;
For all the souls on earth that live,
To be forgiven must forgive.
Forgive him seventy times and seven;
For all the blessed souls in heaven
Are both forgivers and forgiven" (Tennyson).

III. THE PARABLE OF THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT, verses 23-34. "The aim of this parable" as A. B. Bruce observes, "is to justify the apparently unreasonable demand in verse 22: unlimited forgiveness of injuries. After all, says Jesus, suppose you comply with the demand, what do your remissions amount to compared to what have been remitted you by God?"

The parable pictures a great oriental monarch whose high officials—viceroys or satraps—would have to render to him an account of the immense revenues that passed through their hands. One of them owed him ten thousand talents. The margin of our Revised Version informs us that the talent was probably worth a thousand dollars: ten millions stands for any immense sum. According to the law of Moses, a man could be sold for a debt or a theft, Exodus 22.3; Leviticus 25.39; 2 Kings 4.1; and this the king ordered done, since the servant could not pay. Not only the man himself and all that he had, but also his wife and children were to be sold; this, too, was in accordance with ancient law which regarded wife and children as property. The servant prostrated himself before his lord and begged for time in which to make full payment. His lord, touched with pity, not only set him free but cancelled his debt.

The forgiven debtor straightway became the unforgiving creditor. One of his fellow-servants owed him a hundred shillings. The shilling was worth about seventeen cents, and Chrysostom aptly remarks that "These offenses are to those (verse 24) as a drop of water to the boundless ocean." But the brutal official seized and throttled his debtor, saying, Pay what thou owest. His fellow-servant prostrated himself before him and made the same promise in the same words which the unscrupulous official himself had used to his lord, but if it reminded him of his lord's great magnanimity to him, it did not move him to like action. Instead, he cast his fellow-servant into prison. "The action of the pardoned debtor is not so improbable as it seems. He acts on the instinct of a base nature, and also doubtless in accordance with long habits of harsh, tyrannical behavior toward men in his power."

Then the other fellow-servants, moved by pity, took the matter to their lord. Thou wicked servant, exclaimed the king to his pardoned debtor, was it not your duty to show the same mercy to your fellow-servant that I had shown to you? And his lord was angry, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due. In the interpretation of the parable, the certain king is God, and these words do not teach that God is moved by the spirit of revenge, but that the man had sinned away his own pardon.

"The Servant will not do much toward recouping himself of his loan by flinging the poor debtor into prison, but if he cannot get his ducats he will gloat over his 'pound of flesh.' Could a man have done that? But every day we see, and, alas! do, the very same thing in our measure and degree. Do you never treasure up somebody's slights? Do you never put away in a pigeon-hole for safe keeping, endorsed with the doer's name on the back of it, the record of some trivial offense against you? It is but as a penny against a talent, for the worst that any of us can do to another is nothing compared with what many of us have been doing all our lives toward God" (Alexander Maclaren).

IV. THE APPLICATION OF THE PARABLE, verse 35. "So shall your Heavenly Father do unto you," cried Jesus to his disciples, "if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts." Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors, Jesus taught them to pray. Note that the forgiveness is to be from your hearts, "no sham or lip pardon; real, unreserved, thorough-going, and in consequence again and again, times without number, because the heart inclines that way."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

How oft shall I forgive him? verse 21. The question was a very natural one to the Jewish mind accustomed to regard the Law as a digest of injunctions and prohibitions. The Jews complain of the indefiniteness of the gospel, and say that, while it has some high and beautiful truths in the Sermon on the Mount, and some pretty stories called parables, yet everything is practically left to one's own choice. It does not put a yoke on the neck and tell you what you have to do, and what penalty is attached to failure and disobedience. In those respects it is claimed

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Eugène Burnand

LORD, HAVE PATIENCE WITH ME, AND I WILL PAY THEE ALL.

that the law of Moses is far superior to the gospel, because in the former you always know where you are. Our Lord must have often encountered this bias in the minds of his disciples and the outer circle of his hearers. While he sought to make them feel the wind that went with the wheels of the Kingdom, they preferred to stand and count the spokes.—George M. Mackie.

One that owed him ten thousand talents, verse 24. It may seem to violate natural probability that time was allowed to incur such a debt, but the indolence of an Eastern monarch must be taken into account, and the absence of system in the management of finance. As Koetsveld remarks: "A regular control is not in the spirit of the oriental. He trusts utterly when he does trust, and when he loses confidence, it is forever."—A. B. Bruce.

He laid hold on him, and took him by the throat, verse 28. The Roman law allowed a creditor to seize his debtor and drag him before the judge, and Roman writers repeatedly speak of a man's twisting the neck of his debtor till the blood flowed from mouth and nostrils.—John A. Broadus.

Delivered him to the tormentors, verse 34. In early times there were certain legal tortures—a chain weighing fifteen pounds; a pittance of food barely sufficient to sustain life—which the Roman creditor might apply to the debtor in order to bring him to terms. In the East, too, where no depth of apparent poverty excludes the suspicion that there may be somewhere a hidden store, where it is almost a point of honor not to pay but on hardest compulsion, the torture would be often used to wring something from the sufferings of the debtor himself, or from the compassion of his friends. In all those cases the jailer would be naturally the "tormentor" as well.—William R. Trench.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The place is still Capernaum, and our text immediately follows in Mark's Gospel the parable of the Good Shepherd.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

The mother bids Jack forgive Tom this time, and the next day she says the same thing to him. When Jack is a little older he learns that Tom is not the only one to be forgiven, and that it is not once nor twice only that he must forgive. Like Peter, he wishes the number of times were definitely limited.

In this as in many another respect, adults are but children of larger growth. They go to the Bible for definite rules of conduct, but they find them only in the books written for the Jews in their infancy as a nation. "The minute rules in the Pentateuch were lamps for men's feet in the dim, early twilight of the world. But you know how, when the sun rises, the lamplighter goes his round, and puts out the little lamps that have done duty for us in the night, but which are no longer needed in the broad day! And as I turn the pages of this history, and mark the broadening light, to the time when 'the glory of the Lord' is risen upon us, I see the lamplighter going his rounds, and putting out one after another of the legislative lamps which had done duty in an earlier and a darker day."

When childhood is left behind one must enter the freer realm of guiding principles. Christianity is not built upon rules. Are your pupils grasping this great fact?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

WHAT IS TRUE FORGIVENESS?

Beginning the Lesson

What is the difference between being guided by a rule or by a principle? Did Jesus ever give rules for conduct? What rule did Peter wish to apply to forgiveness? He would have forgiveness begin with one and end with seven. A rule has limits, but a principle, in the words of Dr. Jowett, "is like God's overhanging firmament; its boundaries are horizon lines; but when you go to touch them, and say, 'Here the firmament ends,' they recede before you—they can never be grasped."

How did Peter learn that forgiveness cannot be settled by a mathematical rule?

Edward Everett Hale's True Forgiveness

A number of years ago a young thief was caught in the act of committing burglary in the home of Edward Everett Hale in Roxbury. Many believed that Dr. Hale, so well known for his love of mankind, would not appear against him. But on the contrary, Dr. Hale took an active part in having the burglar committed to the reformatory. He believed that the law ought to take its course; and he testified against the prisoner himself, so that the thief was sent to the reformatory for three years.

But though Dr. Hale upheld the law, he did not any the less fail to care for the youthful criminal. Busy as he was, he took time every week, during the three years, to write personally to the thief, trying to wake up his self-respect and stimulate his courage. When the time was up he had secured a good position for the former law-breaker. The young burglar, who had come to regard him as his truest friend, went into the new position, proved himself worthy of it, and became a useful, honest, self-respecting man. A weak mercy might have let him slip back into crime. A loving justice saved him.

It would have been far easier for Dr. Hale to have let him go at first. It would have saved the trouble of thinking about him and planning for him during the three years. It would also have seemed more kind to many unthinking people. There is a great deal of so-called "kindness" in the world today along just such labor-saving lines. To love our fellow-men actively and wisely is a great deal of trouble. To love them passively and weakly is no trouble at all in comparison. But it is the sort of love that is the fulfilling of the law that pays—pays just because it costs.—Wellspring.

Two Forgivers Contrasted

Forgiveness is one of the highest arts of life, because it is divine. It is a great thing to be a really good forgiver. Here are a couple of illustrative stories, selected from two great biographies, one of a poor forgiver, and one of a good forgiver. The first is from Coke and Moore's Life of Wesley. On Wesley's voyage to America, he heard an unusual noise in the cabin of General Oglethorpe, the Governor of Georgia. Wesley stepped in to inquire the cause. It turned out that Grimaldi, the Governor's servant, had devoured the entire stock of the great man's favorite wine. "But I will be revenged!" cried the Governor. "I have ordered him to be tied hand and foot, and to be carried to the man-of-war that sails with us. For, you know, Mr. Wesley, I never forgive!" "In that case, sir," replied Wesley, "I hope you never sin!" The General was quite confounded at the reproof; and putting his hand into his pocket, took out a bunch of keys, which he threw at Grimaldi, saying, "There, villain, take my keys, and behave better for the future!" Oglethorpe was but a poor forgiver.

Now, side by side with this, and by way of contrast, let me set an incident from the life of Gladstone. Gladstone was at the time Chancellor of the Exchequer. He sent down to the Treasury one day for a sheaf of statistics on which he based his budget proposals. Now it happened that, in compiling the statistics, the clerk had made a mistake that vitally affected the entire situation. The blunder was only discovered after Mr. Gladstone had elaborated his proposal and made his budget speech in the House of Commons. The papers immediately exposed the fallacy, and for a moment the Chancellor was overwhelmed with embarrassment. He was made to appear ridiculous before the entire nation. He sent down to the Treasury for the clerk to come to him at once. The clerk duly arrived, trembling with apprehension, and expecting instant dismissal. He began to stammer out his apologies, and his entreaty for forgiveness. Mr. Gladstone stopped him. "I sent for you," he said, "because I could imagine the torture of your feelings. You have been for many years dealing with the bewildering intricacies of the national accounts, and you have done your work with such conscientious exactness that this is your first mistake. It was because of your splendid record that I did not trouble to verify your calculations. I have sent for you to compliment you on that record and to set you at your ease."—F. H. Boreham, in The Other Side of the Hill.

God's Forgiveness

In one of his books the late President Hyde wrote of a physician whom he knew in Andover. The physician had a wild son, who one morning was found dead on a railway track. Apparently he had been killed by an oncoming engine. The

doctor, being a scientific man, did not take appearances for facts, and examined his son's body. On the throat he found marks of hard-pressed fingers. He then knew that the boy had been strangled and that the body had been thrown upon the track to hide the crime.

A day or two later he met in the street a man whom he looked through and through. That night the man, knowing that he was discovered, came to the doctor's office. He began to confess. The doctor stopped him. "I know all about it," he said: "you needn't say another word." "Then," said the wretched man, "what are you going to do about it?" "Only one thing," answered the doctor: "I ask you to promise me that for the rest of your life you will say every day, from your heart, the Lord's Prayer." The man was amazed. He went out of the doctor's office that night a redeemed, because a forgiven, man.

Now, that is human forgiveness. It may seem to you wonderful, but it is a fact. Whence does it come? Certainly it is not the gradual evolution of an earthly quality. It is so lofty that I can imagine no source for it short of the very heart of God. It is a ray from the central fire. If this be true, then we take the highest example of human forgiveness wherever we may find it, and say that God's forgiveness exceeds that by infinite reaches.—From a Sermon Preached in England by Charles Lewis Slattery.

Why Practise Forgiveness?

You know that the sun is always sending the rays of heat from its central fire down upon this earth. But you know if you rose a certain number of miles away from the earth you would perish with cold. The rays are coming all the millions of miles through space, but they make heat only when they reach what we call atmosphere. There must be atmosphere to receive the rays of heat which come from the sun.

In exactly the same way there must be atmosphere about the life of man to receive the forgiveness of God. The rays of God's forgiving love are coming down to humanity perpetually, but that they may create forgiveness in the individual life the atmosphere must catch the forgiveness. That atmosphere is the forgiving spirit. Forgive, and God's forgiveness is yours. Refuse to forgive, and your life is cold and dark—God's forgiveness does not enter your life.—Charles Lewis Slattery.

Subjects for Bible Class Discussion

1. Upon what does unlimited forgiveness depend? Thus understood, can it be practised?

2. "In the just exercise of this grace of forgiveness Christian society may wield a marvelous power." See pages 216-222 of The Training of the Twelve, by A. B. Bruce.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Why is it difficult for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God? 2. What is the effect upon oneself of covetousness? 3. What are some of the temptations into which the possession of money leads one? 4. What is the value of the acquisitive instinct, and how should it be educated? 5. Is it warning against money or instruction in its Christian use that is needed? 6. Have you increased your giving as you have prospered? 7. How does what you give for others compare with what you spend upon yourself? 8. What would you do if you had several million dollars?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WHY PRACTISE FORGIVENESS?

Beginning the Lesson

There is a striking scene in Saxony's history. Otto I, called "Otto the Lion," Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, was reverently celebrating the sacrament at midnight in the cathedral at Quedlinburg. He had just returned from a victory over the forces of his own brother Henry who three times had raised an insurrection against him. The sacrificial mass was being given and every knee was bowed, when the doors were suddenly flung open and in rushed a man clad in penitential robe who flung himself at the emperor's feet. "O brother," he cried, "my brother, forgive me!" The emperor looked at him in scorn and said coldly, "Twice have I forgiven you; and I will not again. The decree has gone forth, and you shall die."

Still was it as death in that royal circle till the abbot turned the pages of the Book of books, which he held in his hands, and read: "And Peter said to him, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven." Bursting into tears the emperor embraced his brother, and cries of joy broke the dread stillness.

Did Jesus mean by his answer to Peter four hundred and ninety times? What did he mean? By the parable which he then spoke, Jesus tells us why we should practise forgiveness. Who will tell the parable?

The difference between the trifling sum which the fellow-servant owed the first servant and the larger sum which the first servant owed his lord stands for the difference between what others owe us and what we owe God. Since God forgives us, ought we not to forgive others? What is the petition about forgiveness in the Lord's Prayer?

Another Unforgiving Debtor

A slave woman on an island off the east coast of Africa received her freedom as a gift. For the first time in her life she received money for her labor, and was slowly saving what she could. "What will you do when you have ten pounds?" she was asked, and quick as a flash she answered, "Buy a slave and make her work for me!"

Peter's Lesson about Forgiveness

What was the lesson that Peter wanted to learn about forgiveness? How often to forgive. How did Jesus answer him? What did Jesus mean by his answer? There is no limit to the number of times we should forgive. A young girl thought that Jesus meant just four hundred and ninety times. She wanted to obey Jesus, but she often found it hard to forgive her brother. "I'll keep a forgiveness account," she thought; "so as to know when it's seventy times seven, and I will forgive him four hundred and ninety times, but after that—" She shut her lips tight.

Before she went to bed she wrote at the top of a clean page in her last year's copy book (The Young Evangelist tells us the story): "List of the Times I forgive John, and under this: Monday—For spilling my beads." Then she remembered that that very day she had upset a block tower John built to show father when he came home, and John had not been the least cross with her. "I suppose I ought to count that on the other side," she said. She then wrote on the opposite page: "The Times John Forgives Me. Monday—For knocking down his tower." That made them even. And so day after day it went on. One day she had a longer list, and another day John had it—often they were even. And Gladys was beginning to feel very humble, and to say to herself, "I guess if I forgive all I can without keeping my list, it will take me all my life to make four hundred and ninety times. Perhaps after all that is what the Bible text means."

Another lesson Jesus taught Peter was how to forgive. It is told in the last words of our printed text: what are they? Forgive every one his brother from your heart. That means forgive him wholly, so thoroughly that you will forget the injury he has done you. The first Moravian missionaries who went to the Eskimos knew what forgiveness meant, and they expressed it in the word which they made up in the Eskimo language. The Eskimos had no word for forgiveness and so the missionaries gave them this one, Issumagijaujungnainermik, and it means, Not-being-able-to-think-about-it-any-more.

An Effective Forgiveness

One evening everybody in the town of X—— was laughing over an advertisement in the weekly paper: "Whoever stole a lot of hides is hereby informed that their owner has a sincere wish to be his friend. If poverty tempted him the owner will keep the whole transaction secret and will gladly put him in the way of obtaining money by means more likely to bring him peace of mind." Of course the queer advertisement must have been put in by a Quaker! Who else would think of trying to catch a thief in such a novel way?

But one man did not laugh. The bundle of hides he had stolen in the darkness of the night lay heavier on his conscience than it had done on his back. What if, after all, the advertisement were a hoax? At the worst he might be clapped into prison—which was likely enough in any case. It took some courage to stand at Tanner Savary's door till a kindly face appeared and a voice asked, "What is

it?" "I've brought them back, Mr. Savary," said the thief. And without asking any explanation the tanner said, "Come with me, friend, while we take them back to the yard: then we will see what may be done for thee."

When they returned, the table was spread for supper, with hot coffee and Mary Savary's famous meat pies. It was too much for the thief. The coffee he tried to drink choked him. He stood up and made a clean breast of his miserable story —how drink and bad ways had brought him to poverty; how hunger had tempted him to steal for the first time.

"Let it be the last time, friend," said the tanner, "and the secret shall remain between us. And now promise me thou wilt not touch strong drink for a year, and I will employ thee at good wages." It was too much: the man dropped his head in his hands and sobbed like a child. Then he steadied himself, and ate the first good meal he had known for many a day.

Next morning he came to the tanyard as an employed workman. And soon he became known and respected as a steady, reliable man, on whose loyalty his master could count at all times. And to the day of his death the secret was kept between his master and himself.—Emily Huntley, in The Sunday School Chronicle.

A Picture of the Divine Forgiveness

Once a year, in a certain mission, a beautiful story is told. The man who tells it is still young, fine looking and prosperous. Wherever he may happen to be, he always goes back to his native city and the little mission on one particular day. The story he tells is this:

Many years ago now, a boy came back to the city from which he had run away some time before. He came riding in a box car, drunk and penniless. The next morning, while his brain was still dull, he stopped a couple of men on the street and asked for money for a meal. One of the men looked closely at him, and then said to the other, "I must ask you to excuse me. I recognize here the son of an old friend, and I must go with him." But what he could not quite bring himself to say in the shock of the recognition was that it was his own son that stood before him.

The father took the boy with him. He arranged his business so that he could be away from it, and gave up his life to his son. He never left him day or night, and never by word or sign rebuked him for the past, but put all the strength of his soul into the battle his boy was fighting. After six months he asked the boy to go with him to the city mission one night; and that night the miracle was wrought, and the boy went out clean of soul, with his decision made. And year by year he comes back to tell his story, in the hope that its message may reach some other boy who has thrown away his life as he himself once threw away his own.

What a picture the story gives of the Divine Fatherhood, seeking and striving with wandering children! "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." How lightly we hold the words upon our lips! But how many of us forgive as God forgives—with no recriminations for the past, no lurking feeling that the one who has wronged us should be made to feel our displeasures—only an eager longing that the one who has sinned shall come back into the right relationship with God and God's children? If not, how dare we pray?—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons

When you bury animosity, don't set up a headstone over its grave.—Emerson.

Hath any wronged thee? Be bravely revenged; slight it, and the work is begun; forgive it, and it is finished; he is below himself that is not above an injury.—Quarles.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Where in the Bible are the commandments given which Jesus cites, and what is the number of each? 2. Is everyone under obligation to sell all he has and give it away? 3. When are riches a peril? 4. How does the possession of wealth tend to draw one away from God? 5. Who said "It is more blessed to give than to receive," and where is the saying recorded? (Acts 20.35.) 6. What does Paul say about giving in 2 Cor. 9.6, 7? 7. Can the desire for riches be as great a stumbling-block to a poor man as the possession of riches to a rich man? 8. Is it the motive which prompts the giving, or is it the amount given, which determines its worth to God?

EASTER LESSON

GOLDEN TEXT: He is not here; for he is risen. Matthew 28.6

LESSON John 20.1-16 DEVOTIONAL READING Ephesians 1.15-23

JOHN 20.1 Now on the first *day* of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, while it was yet dark, unto the tomb, and seeth the stone taken away from the tomb. 2 She runneth therefore, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him. 3 Peter therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. 4 And they ran both together: and the other disciple outran Peter, and came first to the tomb; 5 and stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen cloths lying; yet entered he not in. 6 Simon Peter therefore also cometh, following him, and entered into the tomb; and he beholdeth the linen cloths lying, 7 and the napkin, that was upon his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself. 8 Then entered in therefore the other disciple also, who came first to the tomb, and he saw, and believed. 9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. 10 So the disciples went away again unto their own home.

11 But Mary was standing without at the tomb weeping: so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; 12 and she beholdeth two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. 13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. 14 When she had thus said, she turned herself back, and beholdeth Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. 16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turneth herself, and saith unto him in Hebrew, Rabboni; which is to say, Teacher.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. MARY MAGDALENE'S DISCOVERY OF THE EMPTY TOMB OF CHRIST, verses 1, 2. A stone had been placed over the entrance of the tomb in which the body of the crucified Savior had been laid (Mark 15.46), and the stone had been sealed in a groove at the base of the opening of the tomb. Early on Sunday morning Mary Magdalene came to the tomb with the others, as the "we" in the next verse indicates. She found the stone removed. At once she hastened to tell Peter and John (John always refers to himself in his Gospel as "the disciple whom Jesus loved"). "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him," she cried.

Peter and John Running to the Tomb (Burnand)

"A marvel that the stone was rolled away, but is it more marvelous than that the stone of silence placed upon his memory should be thrust aside?" (W. J. Dawson).

II. JOHN'S AND PETER'S DISCOVERY OF THE RISEN LORD, verses 3-10. Peter and John ran to the tomb. John reached there first, and, looking in reverently and wonderingly where the Savior's body had rested, he beheld only the linen cloths in which it had been wrapped. Then impetuous Peter rushed into the tomb and saw a wonderful thing: the linen cloths which had enveloped Christ's body were rolled up, and the napkin, which had been about his head, was in another place. Leisurely and orderly had been Christ's departure: had others

carried off his body, the grave clothes would not have been left. Then John also entered the tomb, and the sight sufficed him: he believed that Christ was risen. "What was it that John believed? That Jesus had risen? Surely this, but further, that as he had risen, he was therefore the divine Son of God. The conviction then produced was the origin of his Gospel, the source of a life of loving devotion for the apostle John" (C. R. Erdman).

"A heart full of love for Christ requires but little proof to find in him a living Lord. The apostle of love was the first person to believe in the risen Christ, and he it was who afterwards recorded that beatitude which fell from the lips of his living Lord, a beatitude the blessedness of which he was the first to share and in which we all now share,—'Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed'" (C. R. Erdman).

Until they saw proof of the fact, the disciples had not realized that Christ must suffer and rise from the dead. So different had been their conception of his Kingdom, so full had been their thoughts of what they expected it to be, that they had not grasped the meaning of the Scripture nor of his own words to them about the resurrection. They returned to their headquarters at Jerusalem, satisfied that nothing more could be learned at the tomb.

III. MARY MAGDALENE'S DISCOVERY OF THE RISEN LORD, verses 11-16. Mary, who had followed Peter and John back to the tomb, remained outside, weeping. Looking into the tomb she saw two angels clothed in white and sitting where the body of Jesus had lain. One angel only is mentioned in Matthew and Mark: as a commentator observes, minute and detailed agreement in independent narrations under such circumstances would be suspicious. The Greek word for *angel* means *one who is sent with a message,* and their message for Mary was, "Woman, why weepest thou?" There was no cause for weeping, but great reason for rejoicing—The Lord had risen!

"Mary's intense emotion of love and longing preoccupied her against the shock of the apparition: even the instincts of terror were quenched" (George Reith), and she answered in the same words she had used to Peter and John, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." "It is as if these words had been the unceasing rhythm of her thoughts all the time. She could think of nothing else. She was magnetized by sorrow" (R. C. Gillie).

"John's insight taught him first to conclude that his Lord had risen: Mary's want brought her Lord first to satisfy it," for as she turned she beheld Jesus standing. But she did not recognize him. The synoptists (Matthew 28.17; Mark 16.12; Luke 24.16, 37) and John in 21.4 speak of his form as altered; Mary's eyes, moreover, were dim with tears. "Woman, why weepest thou, whom seekest thou?" Jesus questioned.

"They were the first words of the Risen Lord. It is so easy to imagine that the first utterance of the Conqueror of death would have been different—some command or rebuke to his apostles, some great declaration of victory. No; it is an inquiry concerning a woman's sorrow and a woman's quest. It is as if our Lord was declaring that, his own pain and grief for ever past, he still cared more for the griefs and struggles of mankind than anything else" (R. C. Gillie).

"'Woman, why weepest thou?' Father, mother, wife, child, friend and acquaintance, why weepest thou? Their Lord is not here, he is risen, and his own are with him" (W. L. Watkinson).

Supposing Jesus to be the gardener, or garden-keeper, the only one who would naturally be there at that hour, Mary said to him, "Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." How natural it was that she did not mention Jesus by name: there could be no one else thought of.

"Mary," said Jesus, and "Rabboni," Teacher, she cried. "It was only an instant's work, but all the quick emotions of a life-time were endured. That voice! In a flash the cross was forgotten, the tomb forgotten; the mystery of how the dead could live again was unthought of. 'Mary!' 'Master!' Deep called to deep, and the testimony of the inner spirit defied all logic and all contradiction. 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.'"

"We account the resurrection of Christ miraculous, and so it was, but is

it more miraculous than this emergence of Christ into world-wide supremacy, when we recollect how frail was the chance of his even being remembered? A marvel that the body came forth glorious from the grave's dishonors, but is it not an equal miracle that his spirit survived the dishonor of man's neglect, and found in these fragmentary scraps of recollection we call the Gospels a medium sufficient for a ministry that has touched the hearts of all races and filled the thoughts of all ages?" (W. J. Dawson).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Seeth the stone taken away from the tomb, verse 1. The door of the tomb might be rectangular and of solid stone, with a flange fitting into a socket for a hinge, both of the same material; or it might be a cylindrical stone rolling in a groove to the right or left of the opening; or there might be a regular door of stone supported by hinges against which a stone was rolled for further protection. It is not possible to say with certainty which of these methods was followed in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. The sealing of tombs appears to have been common throughout the East. Quite recently they have been found in Egypt, dating back to the time of the Exodus, with their seals still intact upon them.—Bissell.

He seeth the linen clothes lying, verse 5. We are told that Lazarus was bound hand and foot with grave cloths, and his face was bound about with a napkin. A corpse was swathed in these "grave cloths," and apparently the richer the man the more numerous the wrappings. Among the parting injunctions of a rabbi was this, "Do not multiply grave cloths upon me." In Palestine today the Mohammedans wrap their dead in this way. The tightly bound body is carried on a board resting upon the shoulders of men, and in Constantinople such "bundles" are left at the door of a mosque to await the arrival of other dead that prayers may be said over several at once.

The Cross above the Dome of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher
Outlined at Easter with two hundred electric lights

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Our Easter lesson is taken from John's Gospel. Jesus was crucified on Friday, and on Sunday, the first day of the week, he had arisen from the dead. The scene of our text is at the tomb where the body of Jesus had been laid. A stone had been rolled against the opening of the tomb. The chief priests and Pharisees had said to Pilate, "We remember that that deceiver said while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulcher be made sure until the third day." "Ye have a guard," answered Pilate; "go, make it as sure as you can."

The first Easter was at the spring full moon, and in fixing the day to be kept in memory of Christ's resurrection it was thought essential that it should always be the time of the full moon of spring. Accordingly, Easter always falls on the Sunday after the full moon next after March 21st, the spring solstice.

Underneath the dome of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem is shown the tomb which since the time of Constantine has been the traditional location of Christ's burial. Very early in the Christian centuries it was deemed a sacred privilege to visit "the place where the Lord lay." When the Arabian followers of Mohammed gained possession of the Holy Land, pilgrims were still allowed to come and go, but in the eleventh century the Turks became masters of Palestine and soon all Europe was aroused over the fact that pilgrimages were no longer permitted. Then it was that the famous Crusades began, "to rescue the tomb of Christ from the infidels."

Now at every Easter time Jerusalem is crowded with pilgrims, some twenty thousand being the estimated number usually gathered there from all parts of the world. Five or six hundred years ago the Mohammedans, fearing some outbreak against themselves would result at this time, devised a feast which they call that of Neby-Mousa, the Prophet Moses, and this brings every year at the same time a great crowd of Arabs and other Mohammedans.

By many modern scholars the accepted site of the entombment is outside the city wall on the north. Here there is shown a "Garden Tomb" which, though one cannot believe it to be the very tomb, is yet so like what that tomb must have been, that one who enters is satisfied. One has to stoop as did Peter in order to look in.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Paul says in his letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 15.3-8) that his first message to them was of the death and resurrection of Christ. The fact and the great significance of Christ's resurrection had the leading place in the teaching of the early Christians. Has it in your teaching?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE RESURRECTION A REALITY

Beginning the Lesson

The Sabbath began at sunset on the day of the crucifixion. At that hour Mary of Magdala left the tomb of Jesus. Saturday, the Sabbath, was the darkest day of her life. Not only had she lost her Lord under the most harrowing circumstances, but she thought she had lost him forever. The hours must have seemed well-nigh unendurable, and her grief must have had full play. At the end of the day, she bought spices and prepared them that evening for the embalming of the body of Jesus. It was the last tribute she could pay him. On Sunday morning, with other women, she started for the tomb, all unaware of the wondrous event that had meanwhile taken place.

John's Account of the Resurrection

As in the story of the crucifixion, so in the account of the resurrection—or rather, for the actual account of the resurrection itself is not recorded in any of the Gospels, of what happened after the resurrection—we find an entire restraint, an absolute absence of any straining after effect. Though John has to tell of the greatest wonder of the world, he writes as if feeling that a resurrection was, as it were, a wholly natural thing in the case of Jesus, a thing which anyone, remembering all that had gone before, would naturally expect. The resurrection occupies a very important place, of course, in the development of John's main purpose. If Jesus had, as he claimed, life in himself—if no man took his life from him, but he voluntarily surrendered it—if the foregoing history is to have its fitting close—it was not possible that Jesus should be conquered by death. Yet John does not, speaking strictly, attempt to prove the resurrection. He simply recounts some events in connection with it, leaving them to work their own effect. What he wishes his readers to realize is that the whole thing fits in. The simple narrative of these things forms part of the cumulative proof—as distinct from a logical demonstration—which the Evangelist is building up, and contributes its share to that impression, made up of many causative elements, that here is the Son of God.—Henry W. Clark, in Westminster New Testament.

Belief in the Resurrection of Christ

"The resurrection of Christ does not admit of absolute demonstration. Undoubtedly the testimony in favor of the event is strong. It was evidently unquestioned by a great number of intelligent people living at the time of its reputed occurrence. So much force as all such evidence has is to be estimated at its logical value.

"So Columbus estimated at its logical value all the indications that were afforded him of the existence of another continent. To most people of that generation those evidences appeared insufficient to warrant fitting out vessels of exploration, and it was long before funds requisite for the purpose could be secured. And the magnificent result and discovery was due to the fact that in Columbus's mind there was room for America, and in the minds of the other people there was

not. He could see beyond the point where he could see distinctly. The scheme of things as it lay drafted in his mind was drawn on a scale large enough to comprehend everything that was already known; everything that was indifferently surmised; and a good deal beside that neither he nor anyone else had ever conjectured.

"Thomas would not believe in the risen Christ because risen Christs were not a part of the universe as he had plotted it. The other disciples did believe in a risen Christ because they were large enough to be able to think farther than they could think clearly, and because they were able to push the chariot of their convictions over a road that had not been logically passed. And undoubtedly when Thomas did finally accept Christ it was not because he had reasoned him out by pressing his hands into the print of the nails, but because of having had divinely wrought in him a capacity for larger persuasions than his mental and moral contractedness had been hitherto able to accommodate.

"And that is still the way in which we have to acquire the art of great believing, the art of immense assurance of faith and the triumphant joy that is bound to go along with it."

The Resurrection a Reality to the Disciples

We cannot but wonder at the amazing change which took place in the disciples at this period. More than once it has occurred in history that the inspiration of a great event has transformed ordinary men into heroes, but it is not possible to find a parallel to the profound change of character and force we witness in the disciples when we compare what they were before and after the decease of their Master. In the former period they appear singularly deficient in intellectual and spiritual comprehension, whilst later they deal like masters with the highest questions. In moral character they are immensely ennobled. And from a state of doubt, cowardice and despair they give the world the finest example of conviction, valor, and optimism it has ever looked upon. There must have been a cause, and an adequate cause, for this surprising conversion, magnification, transfiguration. It was found in the fact of their assurance of their Lord's resurrection from the dead and ascension into heaven. In the light and power of this extraordinary and glorious fact they became heroes and martyrs.—W. L. Watkinson.

The Resurrection a Reality to a Great Company of Witnesses

There never has been an age since the first Christian age until now when there were not among the peoples of the earth those to whom Christ had become a living person. The healing of the seamless dress has been by beds of pain. In the midst of the storm and the stress of life, despairing men and women have reached out to touch him, and they have touched him and been made whole again. Martyrs, stretched on the agonizing rack, have heard him. Other martyrs, bound among the burning fagots, have seen him in the fire. Tempted men have sought him in the hour of their temptation, and his arm has sustained them. Such as they do not need to be told that long ago, on a Sunday morning in the spring, the grave released him. They know that he is released, for he has become the living power of their lives.

When the eleven, after the tragic death of Judas, chose a twelfth apostle, they did so that he might become a witness with them of the resurrection. Since then, from all nations and tribes, a great company whom God alone can number has been added to the chain of witnesses. Daily their number is increased. Easter is Easter, not because Jesus rose long ago, but because Jesus still lives, and because there are among us those who know that he lives.—The Youth's Companion.

The Resurrection a Reality to You

The best answer anyone of us can make when questioned for proof of the resurrection of the Lord is the humble, but irrefutable, one,—"Christ liveth in me."—J. Stuart Holden.

Easter a Challenge

In the dark hour which at some time must come to us all, when we stand in the presence of that Silence, like which there is no other, when lips that have talked with us so courageously are dumb and eyes that have looked with fortitude upon a life of pain are closed, when ears are for the first time deaf to a cry of need, the heart finds it easy to say, "This is the end."

In that moment the fact that all peoples of all degrees of civilization have believed in and prepared for another life after this has closed, does not warm nor cheer the heart. The fact that science and philosophy seem to point to the indestructibility of life does not bring solace. Even man's inborn longing for more of life does not satisfy. Real comfort, the power to triumph over the pain of separation, the courage to take up all the little threads of life again without bitterness or doubt, the ability to forget personal grief in the presence of others' joys—these things come only to those who have known as a Friend, real and dear, the Man who himself lay quietly a prisoner in a tomb until the third day, when he arose and came back again through the sunshine, birds and flowers to his grief-stricken people, to say, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Know what you have hoped, be assured of that for which you have longed, he seemed to say as he lingered with the world to which he gave himself.

If one who has never known the Great Victor save as a name, who has had no experience with him save in the prayers and hymns of formal worship, is plunged into the darkness of great sorrow, he will find it hard to realize his presence and support. Great peace and confidence come only to those who in pleasant ways and days of sunshine have become acquainted with Christ. So every Easter is a challenge, and all the music and joy of the celebration of the Risen Christ an opportunity, to draw near and learn to know in deeper ways all that he has to give, that when one stands in the valley of the Shadow he may have a warm sense of companionship and a deep consciousness of the touch of the hand of a loved and trusted Friend.—Margaret Slattery.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The place of the resurrection in the teaching of the disciples.

Questions for Pupils for the Next Lesson

See the preceding lesson.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
LIVING WITH THE LIVING CHRIST

Beginning the Lesson

Jesus was dead! John, and Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene and some of the other women who loved their Lord, had seen him die upon the cross. At evening a rich man, called Joseph of Arimathea, went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body, for he loved Jesus and would show him the highest honor in his power. The body of Jesus was taken from the cross and tenderly wrapped in fine linen and laid in Joseph's tomb.

The disciples were in despair. Their Master was dead. In other homes in the city there were feasting and rejoicing, for it was the glad Passover time, but for the little group of Jesus' faithful disciples all was sadness and gloom. How could they ever be happy again, now that they had lost their Friend and Master?

Saturday passed. Very early on Sunday morning, while most of the people in the city were still asleep, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb. Why? They knew that a heavy stone had been rolled before the entrance. "Who shall roll us away the stone?" they anxiously asked each other on the way, for they wanted to enter with the fragrant spices they had prepared for the body of their Lord. What wonderful surprise awaited them?

The Joy of it!

"Rabboni!" Only one word she said,
But her heart was in the cry,
There he stood, her Christ! and the sight sufficed,
Although she had seen him die.
And for Mary of Magdala, through the power
Of that resurrection day,
All the dark and the night, all sin and blight,
Had for ever passed away!
Is the Christ alive? Let us feel it then,
The rapture, the joy, the thrill!
No sorrowful years or despairing tears,
He lives! and is mighty still.

We, too, whom the Master calls by name
Have nothing to do with night,
Let us lift our eyes to the Easter skies,
And live in the endless Light!—Mary E. Allbright.

Because He Lives, We Shall Live also

Against the wall on one side of the corridors of the Vatican stand rows of pagan marbles, each bearing some despairing message, such as "Farewell, farewell, forever farewell." Against the wall on the other side are rows of Christian marbles, and here one reads words of cheer and comfort, such as "In hope." The Christian believes that for him, as there was for Christ, there will be a resurrection from the dead.

An Easter Greeting from Lewis Carroll

A letter written by the author of Alice in Wonderland was found in a copy of that book purchased about forty years ago, and printed in The London Times. Here is part of it:

My dear Child.—Please to fancy, if you can, that you are reading a real letter, from a real friend whom you have seen, and whose voice you can seem to yourself to hear, wishing you, as I do with all my heart, a happy Easter.

Do you know that delicious dreamy feeling, when one first wakes on a summer morning, with the twitter of birds in the air, and the fresh breeze coming in at the open window—when, lying lazily with eyes half shut, one sees as in a dream green boughs waving, or waters rippling in a golden light? It is a pleasure very near to sadness, bringing tears to one's eyes like a beautiful picture or poem. And is not that a mother's gentle hand that undraws your curtains and a mother's sweet voice that summons you to rise? To rise and forget, in the bright sunlight, the ugly dreams that frightened you so when all was dark—to rise and enjoy another happy day, first kneeling to thank that unseen Friend who sends you the beautiful sun?

This Easter sun will rise on you, dear child, "feeling your life in every limb," and eager to rush out into the fresh morning air—and many an Easter-day will come and go, before it finds you feeble and gray-headed, creeping wearily out to bask once more in the sunlight—but it is good, even now, to think sometimes of that great morning when "the Sun of righteousness" shall "arise with healing in his wings."

Surely your gladness need not be the less for the thought that you will one day see a brighter dawn than this—when lovelier sights will meet your eyes than any waving trees or rippling waters—when angel-hands shall undraw your curtains, and sweeter tones than ever loving mother breathed shall wake you to a new and glorious day—and when all the sadness, and the sin, that darkened life on this little earth, shall be forgotten like the dreams of a night that is past!"

We Rejoice on This, the Soul's Triumphal Day

The Easter glory of long ago has grown more fair with the passing centuries, and in our hearts each added year bring fresh revealings of our Risen Lord. He is no dead fact of the olden time, but a living and gracious and potent Presence, moving in our midst even now, showing to us the goodness of God and the greatness of man as he did to those who saw him in the days of his flesh.

By his return from the Unseen he brings us a message from all our dear ones who have passed out of our touch and ken. Through him they tell us that death has no dominion over them, even as it had no dominion over him. The thrall of death is broken, the illusion of the grave dispelled. For those we love and for ourselves we need have no fear. They await us around the bend of the road to receive us into the life eternal.—The Christian Century.

Sentence Sermons

The Lord is risen indeed,
He is here for your love, for your need—
Not in the grass, nor the sky,
But here where men live and die.—James Watson Gilder.

Questions for Pupils for the Next Lesson

See the preceding Lesson.

LESSON IV—APRIL 27

GIVING UP ALL FOR THE KINGDOM

GOLDEN TEXT: Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. Matthew 6.20

LESSON Matthew 19.1-29 DEVOTIONAL READING Proverbs 8.1-11

MATTHEW 19.16 And behold, one came to him and said, Teacher, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? 17 And he said unto him, Why askest thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good: but if thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments. 18 He saith unto him, Which? And Jesus said, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, 19 Honor thy father and thy mother; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. 20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I observed: what lack I yet? 21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that which thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. 22 But when the young man heard the saying, he went away sorrowful; for he was one that had great possessions.

23 And Jesus said unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. 24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 25 And when the disciples heard it, they were astonished exceedingly, saying, Who then can be saved? 26 And Jesus looking upon *them* said to them, With men this is impossible but with God all things are possible.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE DEPARTURE TO JUDEA BEYOND THE JORDAN, verses 1, 2.

II. THE QUESTION ABOUT DIVORCE, verses 3-12.

III. RECEIVING LITTLE CHILDREN, verses 13-15.

IV. IN REGARD TO GIVING UP ALL FOR THE KINGDOM, verses 16-22. And behold one, a ruler of the synagogue, as Luke tells us (18.18), came to Jesus with the question, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" His question was a natural one, for the religious teachers, the rabbis, differed greatly among themselves in their teaching and their practice. "His coming must have been as welcome to Jesus as the visit of the mothers with their children; a man not belonging to the class of self-satisfied religionists of whom he had had ample experience; with moral ingenuousness, an open mind, and a good, honest heart; a malcontent, probably, with the teaching and practice of the rabbis and scribes, coming to the anti-rabbinical Teacher in hope of hearing from him something more satisfying" (A. B. Bruce).

"Why asketh thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good," and to obey his will is to find your right course of action, was Jesus' answer. "But if thou wouldst enter into life, keep the commandments," Jesus further explained. "Which?" very naturally questioned the young man, for besides the ten commandments there were many other laws given by Moses and a multitude given by the scribes. In answer, Jesus cited the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth and fifth commandments of the Decalogue, all of them bearing upon one's treatment of others, and then added from Leviticus 19.18, "and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "All these things have I observed: what lack I yet?" the young man returned in surprise. Dean Farrar voices the young man's thoughts: "Surely the Great Teacher to whom I have come seeking for some great thing to do, or secret thing to know, cannot possibly give as his answer that I am to keep these old, simple, elementary Ten Commandments, which I have known ever since I lisped them at my mother's knee! He must mean something far beyond that." And Dean Farrar comments: "It was exactly like the child in the poem who, having been talked to continually about the glory and majesty of the sea, and being led to the seaside said, 'Is that the mighty ocean? Is that all?'"

"This young man exhibited an attitude which money often helps to encourage. Respectable and respected, he maintained the outward show of religion. In formal ways, he need not transgress. It was easy for him to provide the required offerings and bestow his gifts upon the poor. It was only living up to his social standing to keep, in strict outwardness, these social requirements of the law. But his pride, his self-sufficiency, his con-

scious rectitude, his self-assurance crowded out any truly spiritual keeping of these commandments" (Guy L. Morrill).

"If thou wouldst be perfect, go, sell that which thou hast, and give to the poor," answered Jesus. The Greek word *teleios,* translated *perfect,* means perfect in the sense of single-minded. This was the one thing necessary for this man to do, for between him and the love of God as well as between him and the love of his neighbor, stood the love of his possessions. If he would put that love out of the way he could love God with all his heart and his neighbor as himself. In another's case the one thing necessary may be very different. Martha and Mary and Lazarus were rich, but Jesus gave them no such counsel. Nowhere does Jesus condemn riches in themselves; he condemns the devotion to riches which makes a man lose his sense of the value of better things.

St. Anthony, who became the father of all monasticism, heard these words read in church and decided to follow them literally. He gave away all the possessions he had inherited, and all the money he possessed save a small sum which he kept for his sister's use. The next time he went to church "Take no thought for the morrow" was the word that impressed him, and he then disposed of the little he had kept back for his sister, wishing her to be perfect also. How far he was from understanding Christ! Paul understood him when he wrote to Timothy: "All kinds of evil can spring from the love of money, and they may culminate in the loss of faith and in many sorrows. Urge those who are rich in this world's goods not to set their hope on riches which may take to themselves wings, but on God who gives us all things to enjoy. Urge them to be rich in good works, and by distributing generously to ensure for themselves eternal life."

"And thou shalt have treasure in heaven," added Jesus (recall our Golden Text), "and come, follow me." "It is not a question of one thing more to do, but of the state of the heart, which the suggestion to sell all will test. The invitation to become a disciple is seriously meant. Why should so noble a man not be equal to the sacrifice! Jesus made it with a firm belief that in no other way could this man become happy. *Noblesse oblige.* A potential apostle, a possible Paul even, cannot be happy as a mere wealthy landowner or merchant" (A. B. Bruce).

> **"One thing is needful, only one, yet many things we find,**
> **Are striven for by those whose eyes are spiritually blind;**
> **How much the things of time and sense are sought by them each day,**
> **While from eternal, heavenly things, they turn in scorn away!**
> **Lord, teach me how I henceforth may seek thee and only thee;**
> **So mayest thou unto me, dear Lord, the one thing needful be."**

The young man went away sorrowful; for he was one that had great possessions. Ovid calls riches *Irritamenta malorum,* provocatives of evil. To this young man they were an idol: he was trying to serve God and mammon. "When we read this story, it strikes us as if we were witnessing a tragedy. It is as if we see one struggling in the sea, making desperate efforts to save himself, and almost grasped by the strong arm of another; but, just when we think him saved, he is swept away, he perishes" (A. B. Davidson).

"Yes," said Watts to a visitor who was watching him paint his famous picture entitled "For He Had Great Possessions," "Yes, I am doing a man's back—little else but his back—to explain, 'He went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions.' Fancy a man turning his back on Christ rather than give away his goods! They say the back looks sorry. I don't know but it does. It is what I meant the back to express."

The worst thing about money is, as Emerson tells us, that it so often costs so much!

V. RICHES MAY BE A PERIL, verses 23-26. Jesus read the thoughts of his disciples—possibly they were thinking that their Master had needlessly thrown away an opportunity of winning a very rich man to their cause—and so he said to them, "Verily I say unto you, It is hard for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." "Jesus saw that the more a man has of things that are seen, the less likely he is to realize the need of the unseen things" (Ainsworth). "And again I say unto you," continued Jesus, "it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God." Compare the figure of

speech in Matthew 23.24, and see Light from Oriental Life. "It was the oriental way of saying that to devote large possessions to Christian ends and to administer large fortunes in a thoroughly Christian spirit, is a work of gigantic difficulty. And every conscientious rich man finds that it is so" (Charles R. Brown).

The astonished disciples asked, "Who then can be saved?" And Jesus looking upon them said to them, "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." Man cannot save himself, his salvation is of God. The Greek preposition translated *with,* with the noun in the dative, means *beside, alongside of;* hence the meaning here is, not merely that God can do everything, but that all things are possible to men alongside of, with, God. "The reflection amounted to saying that the previous remark referred to tendency rather than fact. He meant that the tendency of wealth was to act powerfully as an obstructive to the spiritual life" (A. B. Bruce).

"Jesus was the world's greatest Psychologist. No one ever analyzed the motives in the mind of man as did he. No one appreciated more clearly than he how great an obstacle the possession of riches placed in the way of a man's obtaining the highest development and the fullest measure of his ability. At the same time, his scientific impartiality is shown by the statement that it was not absolutely impossible for a man to surmount this obstacle. It called, however, for divine help. Experience amply confirms his conclusion. To discharge one's obligations as a social citizen, far more of the love and power of God is required in the heart of the rich than of the man with moderate means. But fortunately these examples of the power of God are not unknown in our modern life" (Charles Foster Kent).

VI. PETER'S QUESTION AND ANSWER, verses 27-30.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

All these things have I observed, verse 20. Dean Farrar tells us that when Rabbi Chamina lay dying, he said to the angel of death: "Go and fetch me the Book of the Law, and see whether there is anything in it which I have not kept." The Talmud represents God as speaking of "my sanctified ones, who have kept the whole Law from Aleph to Taw."

It is hard for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, verse 23. The Jews inclined to think it much easier for a rich man than for a poor man. The former had in his very prosperity a proof of the divine favor; he was *prima facie* a good man, and might feel very hopeful about entering the Kingdom.—John A. Broadus, in Commentary on Matthew.

It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God, verse 24. Exaggerated speech has always been common among oriental people, and Jesus here uses a common proverb whose exaggeration could have caused his hearers no trouble of interpretation, though it has caused much trouble to modern readers. Many have adopted Madame Montfort's interpretation that the "eye of the needle" is the name for the small gate within the large eastern gate, through which it is possible, when the large gate is closed at night, for a camel to pass after being unloaded. But the exaggeration of the proverbial saying needs no explaining away. By its use Jesus teaches how hard it is for one who trusts in his riches to enter the Kingdom of God. He used a similarly exaggerated proverb when he called the Pharisees "blind guides, that strain out the gnat and swallow the camel!" Matthew 23.2.

The Needle's Eye

There is a rabbinical proverb which speaks of "a camel dancing in a quart measure," and in the Koran it says that one "who accuses our doctrine of falsity shall find the gates of heaven shut, nor shall he enter into paradise till a camel shall pass through the eye of a needle." The Greeks said, "It is easier to hide five elephants under one's arm," and the Latins, "More easily would a locust bring forth an elephant." Sir H. M. Elliot in The History of India as told by its own Historians, shows that the phrase was universal in the East to express difficulty, and quotes a record that in a juggler's performances "larger bodies were made to issue out of small ones; an elephant was drawn through a window, and a camel through the eye of a needle."

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

This lesson text affords opportunity to discuss with great definiteness the teachings of Jesus regarding wealth. No need in the Church is more obvious than the present-day understanding of Jesus' attitude toward possessions, not merely in regard to the more frequently emphasized homely virtues of honesty, thrift and benevolence, but in the basic principles of trusteeship, the spiritual significance of possessions and the Christian management of all we are and have for God, the Owner, in conscious partnership with him. The call is not so much for generalized warnings against the perils of money, as for constructive instruction in the Christian attitude to and management of money. How shall a Christian make money? How much can he accumulate? How use it? How much shall he spend upon his own needs? Shall he leave any to his family; if so, how much?

A basic misconception which lies at the roots of much of the misunderstanding of the stewardship ideal and which has and still is hampering the achievement of a true Christian attitude toward possessions, appears in the very wording of the title of this lesson (which has been designated for stewardship treatment), *"Giving up* All for the Kingdom." Too often, stewardship is presented as if it were merely "giving"—"giving" being a special act to be indulged in only on occasions, and from motives differing from and superior to, those properly obtaining at all other times in the life; the implication being that for the Christian, as long as he "gives" on occasion, life generally need not be a "giving." But stewardship makes all life a ministry—a giving—and our special "giving acts," by which particular parts of our possessions—time, talents and money—are devoted to special purposes, are not to be accounted superior acts but particular evidence of our realization that all we are and have belongs to God and is to be delivered for him, not only in these special acts of giving but in their entire use.

Then too, with fatal effects the title further suggests that "giving," even in this Christian sense, means "giving *up*," a yielding up, under duress of what we have, in answer to an external command. But stewardship seeks to make our "giving" a "sharing" as partners in a common purpose, out of a common resource. Christian giving is not "giving up" under external demand, but "sharing with" under the inward pressure of our joyous partnership with God—we giving, as God gives, because in our fellowship with him we, too, love, and love always gives. Love always possesses only to share.

In the light of these considerations, lead your pupils to suggest a more fitting title, such as:

Riches—A Tyrant or a Tool
Giving—Not an Incident but Life's Main Task
All For the Kingdom
Using All or Giving All, Which?

—Guy L. Morrill, for the United Stewardship Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States and Canada.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

STEWARDSHIP OF POSSESSIONS

Beginning the Lesson

We have a very familiar story as our lesson text today, and there are numerous points which we might legitimately raise in connection with it, but we must pass them by in order to have time for a discussion of the topic which it brings to us, Stewardship of Possessions.

In the fourth circle of hell Dante places the avaricious and the prodigal, and says

of them: "Ill-giving and ill-keeping have taken from them the fair world, and set them to this scuffle. . . . Now canst thou, son, see the brief jist of the goods that are committed unto Fortune, for which the human race so scrambles; for all the gold that is beneath the moon, or that ever was, of these weary souls could not make a single one repose."

There is no suspicion that the rich young man who had this conversation with Jesus was guilty of ill-getting, but his ill-giving and ill-keeping did not bring him the repose of soul which he desired when he came to Jesus asking, "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Ruskin called hoardings "illth": is this a good name for them? What do you think of Charles Foster Kent's translation of Luke 12.13: "A man's life consists not in having more than he needs"?

The Acquisitive Instinct

Does Jesus expect us to eliminate the acquisitive instinct from our nature and live the life of the ascetic? Should we obscure it—lessen its incentive to achievement? Or does the Christian ideal call for a strengthening of this acquisitive instinct, providing for it full direction?

The stewardship ideal can glorify this instinct—giving this driving motive to create and exploit, a place of ministering power in the partnership we have with God. "Getting" becomes part and parcel of the whole life attitude. We are to be good stewards both in the processes of getting and in the objectives for which we get.

Note the effect of the *uninstructed* acquisitive instinct in the thinking of this rich young man. Life is a getting *to have and to keep*. Even eternal life is thought of as a possession to be received, "that I may have." Jesus makes clear that eternal life is not something to be possessed but something to be. It is an attitude rather than a having. He said, "If thou wilt *be* perfect." John in his Gospel defines eternal life as "knowing God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent," "knowing" being used in the sense of "experiencing in practical actuality." Eternal life is not knowing God intellectually in the statements of a formula or a creed, but knowing him in experience and living in fellowship with him—sharing his purposes, entering into his intents, and expressing his love in and through all we are and all we have.

Competition to get and have more material possessions than others is the goal of most living. But competition for the Christian should be the urge to excel in character, and to find more effective ways of service and of giving.

Salvation is even yet in the minds of too many, getting heaven with its peace and joy—acquiring safety and deliverance from punishment and loss—rather than sharing in Christ's life of tenderness, unselfishness and devotion—a deliverance to sacrifice and ministry.

This pressure to get is not that I may possess, to keep, but that I may get, to use, as God's partner, in the building of his Kingdom of love among men. Stewardship shows up this acquisitive instinct as God's gift bestowed to thrust men out to exploit and make available for God's children the abounding riches which he has stored away in his universe for use by all his children. The acquisitive instinct should be brought wholly under the interpretation and direction of Christ.—Guy L. Morrill.

Christian Stewardship as Outlined by W. J. Dawson

Principles.

1. God is the Owner of all.
2. Man is the steward of all he possesses.
3. Stewardship is expressed by intelligent, cheerful, systematic, proportionate, sacrificial giving of one's self, service, substance.

Methods.

1. Keep a strict record of your income, expenses, gifts.
2. Separate unto the Lord a definite portion, at least one-tenth, more if possible.
3. Use the remainder in Christian living, Christian thrift, Christian service.

Effects.

1. Spiritual: confirms faith, energizes prayer, ennobles character.
2. Financial: insures God's blessing, increases church revenue, supplies world's need.

A Striking Comparison

The sketch here given is from one published in The Congregationalist last year. The figures were made by Edward W, Macy from a study of the latest available

statistics. In 1925 over four billion six hundred million more was spent for four luxuries (candy, soft drinks, tobacco, and pleasure gasoline) than for all the work of the Protestant Churches.

In 1925 contributions to all Protestant Churches totaled $469,871,678

Contributions to Hospitals $259,497,465

Contributions to Colleges $118,114,084

In 1927 there was paid for tobacco (retail) $2,031,000,000

In 1926 there was spent for candy (retail) $1,000,000,000

In 1926 there was expended for soft drinks (retail) . . . $497,500,000

In 1926 there was paid for gasoline for pleasure vehicles . . $1,541,961,000

A Comparison of Expenditures

For Bible Class Discussion

Money, the acid test. See book with this title by David McConaughy ($.75).

2. "What could we forego from our present possessions without being thereby made less rich in real possessions? The value of such life simplification to our spirit and in our relations to our fellow men."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What does Luke say was the effect upon the disciples of Jesus' prediction of suffering and death? 2. How do you reconcile the statement of verse 20 with that of Mark 10.35? 3. What are the ambitions of mothers today for their sons? 4. How did James "drink the cup" that Jesus drank? (Acts 12.2.) 5. What standard of greatness did Jesus declare in Mt. 11.11? 6. What is the popular notion of greatness? 7. By what standards do you measure greatness? 8. Name six men or women of your generation whom you account great.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
HOW SHALL WE USE OUR MONEY?

Beginning the Lesson

You know Longfellow's beautiful story of Evangeline: do you recall how one moonlight night after many years of wandering, Gabriel in one boat and Evangeline in another came so near that their oustretched hands might have clasped, had they but known it? Each was longing to find the other, but the great opportunity passed. That is the saddest part of the story.

One time Jesus and a rich young man were seeking each other. And the young man missed his great opportunity, not, however, because he did not know it, but because he would not take it. What is the story?

Why Jesus Tested the Young Man

"Think not this trial hard and stern,
Coldly applied by Christ to shame his pride:
No, 'twas a genuine offer, not bestowed

On many. Men were often sent away.
Not the relinquishment of outward wealth
The chief thing Christ required, but that the man,
Set free from earthly things, should then begin
A loftier career, beside himself.
Think what this offer meant. Christ saw in him
High capabilities: his heart went out
To that young man. But it was not to be:
His weakness was revealed; before his eyes
Rose the heroic vision, and he saw
It was beyond his power."

The Rich Young Man of Japan

One of the great men of today is Toyohiko Kagawa of Japan who belongs to a wealthy, aristocratic Japanese family. As a boy he attended a Mission School. To conquer a stubborn case of tuberculosis he spent a year in a fisherman's cottage where he came into close touch with the poor and learned to love them, and to see the need of befriending them. Later, he went to live in the slums of Kobé, where he gave away his fortune to help the needy people around him, lived in one room nine feet square and usually had but one meal a day. Here he wrote a book entitled The Psychology of Poverty which soon made him famous. He had become a follower of Christ, and in order to learn how to lead his people he came to America to study theology, taking his degree from Princeton University.

On returning to Japan he worked desperately hard for prohibition, better housing for the poor, and many other reforms. As he needed money to accomplish his purposes he wrote a book which gained great popularity, reaching its three hundredth edition in three years. It is called Crossing the Death-Line, and describes the temptations of a young man in a modern Japanese underworld, his successful fight to escape and subsequent unselfish service for others. Today he is one of the most successful Christian evangelists of the world, is constantly writing and speaking for great causes, conducts a church in the heart of the worst slums in Japan, trains Japanese labor leaders, investigates the wretched conditions under which the Japanese labor in the coal-mines. And he still lives a life of strict poverty.

A Collection or an Offering?

One morning as a boy sat down to dinner, he noticed Fido sitting close beside him, looking up into his face in that queer way which a dog has when he is expecting you to give him something. Harry could hardly withstand the appeal of that hungry tail and those wistful eyes. I think some of you know just how he felt! And when his father passed his plate, loaded with chicken, Harry was on the point of putting it down on the floor for Fido's dinner. But his father told him it was too good for the dog; it was for him; and after dinner he might give Fido his portion. So Harry reluctantly ate his good dinner, while Fido watched and waited.

After the meal was over, Harry's father told him he might gather up the bones and the scraps and give them to the dog. When he had gathered them up and put the plate down he said: "Fido, I meant to give you an offering, but this is only a collection."

This was the difference, wasn't it? The offering was what the boy wanted to give because he loved his dog; the collection was that which remained after everybody else had been satisfied.

Which do you think we should give to God—a collection or an offering?—Frank T. Bayley, in Little Ten Minutes.

Sentence Sermons

Honor Jehovah with thy substance.—Proverbs.

What I spent, I had; what I saved, I lost; what I gave, I gained.—G. F. Watts.

I ask not wealth, but power to take
And use the things I have aright.—Phœbe Cary.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. How long before Jesus' crucifixion did this conversation take place? 2. Who were the sons of Zebedee? 3. What do you think of the request of the two disciples? 4. What do you think of the attitude of the ten disciples? 5. Is it right to be ambitious? 6. For what is it right to be ambitious? 7. Who are the great? 8. Name several men and women whom you think great, and tell why you think so.

PROMOTION IN THE KINGDOM

GOLDEN TEXT: The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. Matthew 20.28

LESSON Matthew 19.30 to 20.28 DEVOTIONAL READING Philippians 2.1-11

MATTHEW 20.17 And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples apart, and on the way he said unto them, 18 Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, 19 and shall deliver him unto the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify: and the third day he shall be raised up.

20 Then came to him the mother of the sons of Zebedee with her sons, worshipping *him*, and asking a certain thing of him. 21 And he said unto her, What wouldest thou? She saith unto him, Command that these my two sons may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand, in thy kingdom. 22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I am about to drink? They say unto him, We are able. 23 He saith unto them, My cup indeed ye shall drink: but to sit on my right hand, and on *my* left hand, is not mine to give; but *it is for them* to whom it hath been prepared of my Father. 24 And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation concerning the two brethren. 25 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 26 Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; 27 and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant: 28 even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE PARABLE OF THE LABORERS IN THE VINEYARD, 19.30 to 20.16.

II. JESUS ANNOUNCES HIS APPROACHING CRUCIFIXION, 20.17-19. Jesus took his disciples away from the crowd and plainly told them that at Jerusalem, whither they were going he would be delivered to the Sanhedrin, who would condemn him to death and give him up to the Romans to be mocked, scourged and crucified, and that on the third day he would be raised up. This is the third prediction of his death which Matthew records: see 16.21 and 17.22. "Jesus speaks here as a voyager to whom the sound of the cataract is no longer a distant murmur. He is in the grip of the rapids, and has braced himself for the plunge" (J. M. E. Ross). The awful literal meaning of his words did not "register" with the disciples: Luke adds (18.34), "Yet they understood none of these things." They were unable to understand because his words were so contrary to what they had been taught to expect would happen to the Messiah. Every morning they had wondered if before the sun went down their Master would proclaim himself king, and every evening they had looked forward confidently to the morrow, for their expectation had not been weakened by its fulfilment being delayed. They must have thought that their Lord's words concerning the things that were to happen expressed figuratively some struggle through which he must pass before he should be made king. That his rule was not to be a temporal one, that the thrones he had promised them (19.28) were symbolical of spiritual sway—these facts they could not comprehend.

III. A SCRAMBLE FOR HONORS IN THE KINGDOM, 20.20-21. Then Salome, wife of Zebedee, came with her sons James and John and asked Jesus to give them the two seats of honor in his kingdom, on his right and left hand. As recorded in Mark (10.35), it is the two sons themselves who made the request, and Jesus addresses them as if this were the case. "It is in accordance with the law maxim, 'He who does anything through another, does it himself' " (John A. Broadus). How self-centered the disciples were even at the moment when their Lord had made disclosure of the tragic fate awaiting him! They were so occupied with themselves and their own future that the only impression his words made upon them was that the Messianic Kingdom was about to be established, and they were eager to preempt the best places for themselves. Note that they do not include Peter in their request—were they still jealous because of the special promise made to Peter, recorded in Matthew 16.18?

"When I read this story of the way the early disciples went back upon Jesus at a dark hour in his life and thought so much of themselves when

they ought to have been thinking of him, I am a little ashamed for them; but when I think it all over I hope that I shall never be any worse than they were, and that I may come back from my lapses into selfishness as heroically as they did, and give as fine proof that I have the real spirit of the Master as they afterward did" (James Black).

IV. AN ARRESTING QUESTION AND A READY ANSWER, 20.22. "Ye know not what ye ask," Jesus said to the two disciples. "Are ye able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" "To drink the cup" is a figurative expression for "to endure the portion allotted one," whether of good or of ill; here Jesus is indicating by a vivid phrase that they who would be near him in his mission must share his peril and sacrifice. "We are able" was their answer.

"They wanted thrones—Christ asks them, can they drink his bitter cup? And these men, looking into their own hearts and knowing that their zeal and passion for Christ was the deepest thing in their souls, answer humbly and yet boldly, 'We are able.' Is this a bit of inconsiderate and foolish boasting? No, this is love's daring. 'We are able.' It is a great answer, a moving answer, a most magnificent answer, and if they were dastards in their request, they were mighty men of valor in their confession. If they wanted thrones, they were ready to pay the price for them. There are some of us who want the throne without the cup and the baptism, there are some of us who want the crown without the cross; there are some of us who want the white robe without the tribulation. But James and John were willing to pay the price" (J. D. Jones).

V. FITNESS, NOT INFLUENCE, SECURES HONOR IN THE KINGDOM, 20.23. "My cup indeed ye shall drink," Jesus then declared. We know that James was martyred (Acts 12.2), and that John was exiled to Patmos (Rev. 1.9). John, according to tradition, was plunged into boiling oil and endured other persecutions, but died a natural death. "But to sit on my right hand, and on my left hand, is not mine to give; but it is for them for whom it hath been prepared of my Father." It was prepared for those who should deserve it, Mt. 25.34, 35; Rev. 3.21. "Let us suppose that there is one umpire, and many good athletes enter the lists. Two of the athletes, who are very intimate with the umpire, approach him and say, 'Cause us to be crowned and proclaimed victors,' on the strength of the good will and friendship between them. But he says to them, 'This is not mine to give, but it is for them to whom it has been prepared by their efforts and sweat'" (Chrysostom, quoted in Westminster New Testament).

Our word aristocracy comes from two Greek words, aristos, best, and kratein, to be strong, to rule, and it rightly means, therefore, the rule, not of the highborn, but of the best. We can all belong to this aristocracy, if we will.

VI. INDIGNATION IN THE RANKS, 20.24. When the ten disciples heard about this request of the two, they were all highly indignant. They were all alike, all guilty of selfishness, of wanting to be first, the jealous ten as much as the outspoken two.

It is true, is it not, that to care as much about the interests of others as about our own interests does not come naturally to most of us? That we do not always obey Paul's injunction about "in honor preferring others"?

VII. TRUE GREATNESS LIES IN SERVICE, 20.25-27. Calling the disciples to him, Jesus reminded them that the rulers of the Gentiles played the tyrant over them and their great ones exercised authority over them. This is the worldly idea of greatness—power to exercise authority, high position which can demand service, enforce obedience, and exact signs of homage. "Not so shall it be among you," Jesus contends, but greatness shall be power as a means of rendering service: "Whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant." Among you the passport to power is service: you are measured, not by the way you lord it over others, but by the way you serve others: greatest among you is the one who is most useful to his fellow men.

"It is always our peril that we hunger for place more than for character.

These disciples wanted to be great and prominent; the Lord wanted them to be pure and good. They longed to be Prime Ministers; the Lord purposed that they should be glad to be ministers, working contentedly in an obscure place. They wanted to be the King's cup-bearers; he offers them to drink of his cup. They call for sovereignty; he asks for sacrifice. They seek a life of getting; he demands a life of giving. Through self-sacrifice we pass to our throne" (J. H. Jowett).

VIII. OUR GREAT EXAMPLE, 20.28. "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." Peter summed up the life of Jesus by saying, "He went about doing good" (Acts 10.38). "And to give his life a ransom for many." This is the first mention of Christ's death as an atoning, sacrificial death for others. See I Peter 1.18, 19. A ransom for many: "sufficient for all, effectual for many."

"Christ was the only Person in the whole range of history who can be said to have known how to be first while retaining the spirit of him who is last; how to be highest while retaining the spirit of him that was lowest. Here is the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (Reginald J. Campbell).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

One on thy right hand and one on thy left hand, in thy Kingdom, verse 21. One day God will be seated, and the angels will give thrones to the great ones of Israel that they, too, may sit, while God sits among them as president of the court of justice, and thus they judge the peoples of the world,—Rabbinical Saying.

A ransom, verse 28. The allusion may be to the half-shekel which every Israelite paid annually at the Passover-season to the temple-treasury, "a ransom for his soul unto the Lord" (Ex. 30.12-16); or to the ransom paid for captives to procure their freedom. The temple and tribute would be in their thoughts at that season.—David Smith, in Gospel of Matthew.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Peter followed up Christ's talk about the peril of riches (our last lesson) by asking what should be their reward—his and the other disciples!—for giving up their all to follow him. Jesus' answer was that every sacrifice would be rewarded; the Twelve were the first to learn about the Kingdom and to serve the King, and should have their reward, but they must expect others to be made equal with them: many shall be last that are first, and first that are last. To enforce this truth, Jesus gave his parable about the Laborers in the Vineyard. James and John could not have misunderstood the lesson of the parable, yet it did not stifle their desire to be first. Their request (through their mother) for special preferment was made soon thereafter.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Jesus had recently told his disciples that suffering and death were near at hand for him, when two of them came to him with their presumptuous request. With the utmost tenderness he taught rather than rebuked them by his question and explanation. As a penetrating Bible scholar explains, he is like a mother pitying the ignorance of little children and instructing them when they are jealous one of another and careless of her own feelings. It is as if, when a mother had said she would some day die, one child cries, "Then I may have your diamond ring?" and another, "And I your gold watch?" And she answers gently, because she knows that they do not know what death really means, nor intend to hurt her.

When the ten murmured, Jesus gathered them all around him and taught them the nature of true greatness by his beautiful words as to the mission of the Son of man. He had taught that lesson many times before, but he was not discouraged because his pupils had not learned it. What a wonderful patience was his!

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

CHRIST'S STANDARD OF GREATNESS

Beginning the Lesson

When John Cairns lay dying he repeated over and over in his delirium, "You first; I follow." This leader of men in the Scottish Church of the last century was as

humble as he was great, and these last words expressed his habitual attitude toward others. It was the exact opposite of the attitude of the early disciples, as seen in the incident of our lesson which happened as they were on their way to Jerusalem for the last time with their Master. What did Jesus tell them, and why did they not comprehend him?

Salomics

In a charming essay written several years ago, William Osler called a certain group of people Salomics. The Salomics, named after Salome, supposed to be the mother of the sons of Zebedee, who asked Jesus to give the highest commissions to her sons, are those persons who look upon religion as a way of promoting themselves, of advancing their position. Salome meant well. She loved the boys she had borne and brought up, and she wanted to do as well as she could for them. She believed, as so many mothers since her day have believed, that the great thing to pray for and push for in this world is visible success. She knew of nothing better or more to be desired than position, place, and power. She had dreamed, ever since she was a little girl, of a coming great King who would break the yoke of Rome, make Jerusalem a free, holy city, a center of the new age—who would be a world-ruler, with a splendid court on Mount Zion. What glory to have two sons in that court! Could a mother aspire to any loftier triumph than to have her boys sit on either side of the throne of this Messianic King!

It took some courage to come out with her request, but she had carried it for weeks on her heart, and at last, when the opportunity favored, it slipped off her lips, and the word was spoken.

"That is not the right thing to ask," is the solemn answer. "It shows ignorance of the real nature of the Kingdom. He who aspires to enter my Kingdom must not expect places, but suffering; not honors, but opportunities to sacrifice; not rewards, but hard baptisms. Are the two sons able to suffer with me?"

The world has never learned the lesson which this ambitious mother's experience ought to teach. There is still much Salomic religion in all churches. The stress is laid on reward; the ambition is for glory of place. The old ignorance of the real nature of the Kingdom is living on. We can not expect to have a religion of power until we get beyond a religion of selfishness and of self-seeking.—Rufus M. Jones.

How to Get the Best Seats

To push on in the crowd, every struggler must use his or her shoulders. If a better place than yours presents itself just beyond your neighbor, elbow him and take it. Look how a steadily-purposed man or woman at court, at a ball, or exhibition, wherever there is competition and squeeze, gets the best place; the nearest the sovereign if bent on kissing the royal hand; the closest to the grandstand if minded to go to Ascot; the best view and hearing of the Rev. Mr. Thumpington when all the town is rushing to hear that exciting divine; the largest quantity of ice, champagne and seltzer, cold pâté, or other, his or her fleshpot if gluttonously-minded at a supper where hundreds of people come empty away. What a man has to do in society is to assert himself. Is there a good place at table? Take it. At the Treasury or the Home Office? Ask for it. Do you want to go to a party to which you are not invited? Ask to be asked. Ask A., ask Mrs. B., ask Mrs. C., ask everybody you know. You will be thought a bore, but you will have your way. What matter if you are considered obtrusive, provided that you obtrude? By pushing steadily nine hundred and ninety-nine people in a thousand will yield to you. Only command persons, and you may be pretty sure that a good number will obey. How well your money will have been laid out, O gentle reader, who purchases this, and taking the maxim to heart follows it through life! You may be sure of success. If your neighbor's foot obstructs you, stamp on it, and do you suppose he won't take it away?—Thackeray, in The Newcomes.

Why Jesus was Great

If Jesus of Nazareth had said to himself, "Go to, now! I will go up and down Palestine in the valleys and on the hillsides, and I will preach progressive religion to the people so that they shall surround my name with glory; I will espouse the liberal cause, forsooth, that my name shall resound down the vistas of time, that, as long as men tread the vestibule of eternity, my fame shall be heard of men,"—Jesus would long since have been forgotten. It was because looking down from the cross upon the men who had effected his painful execution, he was great and grand

enough to say, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do", it is because he could consort with the fallen and the sinner; because he could go to help and to cheer where so-called decent men refused to go; because he pleaded for the weak and the down-trodden, nay, because he sought them out and went about doing good; because, in a word, Jesus served his Father in heaven without asking reward, without seeking notoriety, without requesting that his name be mentioned; because, in his loving service, his right hand knew not what his left hand did, he is as little forgotten eighteen hundred years after he is dead, as he is greatly loved and worshiped.—Rabbi J. Leonard Levy, in a Sermon on Jeremiah.

Whosoever Would Become Great among you Shall Be your Minister

David Livingstone was not the only man that ever went to Africa, but because he gave himself away that Africa might be lifted into civilization, his name will remain above all others in the modern history of that continent. India was controlled for a long period by mercenary men. They were there for personal profit and their names are unknown. William Carey gave himself to India, and he will ever remain among the first in the civilization of that great empire. For three hundred years before Christ, thousands had been crucified and thousands have been crucified since, but that which makes the Man who was crucified on the hill outside of Jerusalem the most fascinating Personage of all ages is that he literally and absolutely gave himself away for the good of all mankind, and nowhere has fellowship been made so practical and carried to such widths and heights of service as by Jesus Christ, and the history of Christianity has been his reflection, although sometimes the practice has been blurred in the twilight of faltering faith.—Peter Ainslie, in My Brother and I.

Abraham Lincoln's Ambition

Every man is said to have his pet ambition. Whether it be true or not, I can say for one that I have no other so great as that of being truly esteemed by my fellow men by rendering myself worthy of their esteem.

Consider the Dinosaur!

He was a great lizard—the dinosaur. He was eighty feet long and lived in that period of the earth's history known as the "Age of Reptiles." He was king of the earth some millions of years ago, and the diminutive ancestors of our present-day mammals scampered about between his huge legs in a state of terrible panic. Yes, the dinosaur ruled the world, and his great lumbering body demanded right of way over every other species of animal as he crashed his way through the vast, silent forests. But he is gone. He flourished for but one brief hour, so to speak, in the earth's unfolding life. And now we are digging up his fossil remains and exhibiting his reconstructed body in museums. His was a temporary glory. But his brief life served to illustrate the difference between mere bigness and genuine power.

Symbol of false power—the dinosaur. Where is real power? "There is no power but of God," says Paul. And he is right. Mere bigness, hugeness, bulk, always arrests the attention, but it has in it nothing of lasting influence or achievement. Genuine power is generally silent and invisible, but is permeated with an indescribable dynamic. In the last analysis, the most potent force in the universe is spiritual in character. It is of God. And it finds its expression in the miscroscopic motion of the atom, the chemical changes in earth, sea, and air, in the marvels of electricity, in the painful evolution of man from his primitive ancestors, in the slow unfoldment of history, in the drama of the individual human soul as it plays its part for threescore years and ten in consecutive acts of hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, victories and defeats, in the mighty struggle for character.

Power! God at work in the world! He has given us many revelations of his presence, but once, on Calvary, in a vivid flash that the world will never forget, he showed mankind a cross. And upon that cross men and women saw the essence of all genuine power. They saw the righteousness of God, clear and beautiful—the eternal morn for right living. They saw also the infinite, long-suffering, all-comprehensive love of God. Yes, the cross bodied forth in visible form the nature and the purpose of Almighty God. The struggle for life is the order of the world, the dinosaur philosophy of men; the struggle for the life of others is the doctrine of the cross, the philosophy of God. Which will win in the end?

The dinosaur lasted an hour. Christ is eternal.—From an Editorial in Zion's Herald.

Whosoever Would be First among you Shall Be your Servant

I talked one day with H. G. Wells after his Outline of History had appeared. I said:

"You have stood upon a mountain and viewed the whole panorama of human progress. Of all the billions of human atoms that have lived, what heads rise above the common level? Among all those who have fought for fame, who have actually achieved it? What half dozen men among them all deserve to be called great?"

He turned the question over in his mind for a day or two, and then gave me a list of six names, with his reasons for each. An extraordinary list!

Jesus of Nazareth; Buddha; Asoka; Aristotle; Roger Bacon; Abraham Lincoln.

Think of the thousands of emperors who have battled for fame; who have decreed themselves immortal, and fashioned their immortality into monuments of brick and stone. Yet there is only one emperor, Asoka, on the list; and he is there not because of his victories but because he voluntarily abandoned war, after his success, and devoted himself to the betterment of his millions of subjects. Think of the hosts who have struggled for wealth, fretting over figures, denying their generous instincts, cheating and grasping and worrying. Yet no millionaire is on the list, excepting again Asoka. Who sat on the throne in Rome, when Jesus of Nazareth hung on the cross? Who ruled the hosts of Persia when Aristotle thought and taught? Who was King of England when Roger Bacon laid the foundations of modern scientific research? And when the historian, looking over the field where they contended for the prize, seeks for something which has endured, he finds the message of a teacher, the dream of a scientist, the vision of a seer. "These six men stood on the corners of History," said Wells in his picturesque way. "Events hinged on them. The current of human thought was freer and clearer because they had lived and worked. They took little from the world and left it much. They did not get; they gave; and, in the giving, gained eternal influence."

In our own country, in Monticello, in Virginia, an American statesman lies buried. He was Secretary of State, Minister to France, President of the United States; yet his epitaph makes reference to none of these honors. It reads:

"Here was buried Thomas Jefferson, Author of the Declaration of American Independence, of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom, and Father of the University of Virginia."

The offices that he held are forgotten on the stone, as they will be eventually forgotten by all but the historian; he desired to be remembered only by what he gave. And he has his wish.

Somewhere in his Essays Emerson has a sentence to this effect: "See how the mass of men worry themselves into nameless graves, while here and there a great, unselfish soul forgets himself into immortality." A fine thought, finely phrased; but Jesus thought it first.—Condensed from The Man Nobody Knows, by Bruce Barton.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The request of the two brothers was ignorant presumption, but true to human nature. See Chapter XVII of The Training of the Twelve, by A. B. Bruce.

2. The Christian's call to service. What place has service in the teaching of Christianity and in the expression of the Christian life? What are the results of professed religious life when service is eliminated? What are some of the more common calls to service? To which of these shall we respond with united effort? What are the rewards of Christian service?—Adult Series.

3. The serving Christ.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Why did Jesus refuse the homage of the people after the feeding of the five thousand, and why did he accept it here? 2. What did the Entry mean to Jesus? To the disciples? To the people? To the scribes and Pharisees? 3. What does *Hosanna* mean? 4. Read Psalm 118. 5. How did the popular enthusiasm for Jesus hasten his death?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

GREATNESS THROUGH SELF-DENYING SERVICE

Beginning the Lesson

What does our word *ambition* mean? The Standard Dictionary gives two definitions of the word:

1. An eager or inordinate desire to gain power or distinction, as by obtaining office, military fame, literary eminence, or wealth.
2. An eager desire or steadfast purpose to achieve something commendable or that which is right in itself; as, an ambition to improve one's character and abilities.

There can be no question about the rightfulness of the second sort of ambition. How about the first, if we leave out the word inordinate? What did we decide last week about the rightfulness or wrongfulness of possessing wealth? Is it right to be ambitious for literary eminence, to wish to be a great author or poet? Can one not serve the world through his writings? What about the desire to be a great military officer? Is it right to have great desire for power?

A bishop was once examining several candidates for the ministry. He asked them if they were desirous of becoming preëminent in their chosen field of labor, and each replied in humble accents that such was not his desire. "You are a sorry lot, all of you," was the bishop's comment. Was the bishop wrong? Is not a man without ambition in service a sorry sort of man? Ambitiousness is one of man's noblest characteristics. It is right to wish to be great. Only one must rightly understand wherein true greatness lies, and must be ambitious for noble ends. Whether ambition is right or wrong depends upon its object, and upon the use one wishes to make of a right object.

What was the ambition of James and John? Was theirs a right ambition? What did the other disciples think about it? What does their attitude show as to their own hearts? Jesus did not settle the matter as to whether it was James or John or Peter or Matthew or any of the others whom he accounted the most important member of his little circle. It was not his way to put one above the other. He just showed them that each was wrong in wanting to fare better than the rest.

What question did Jesus ask the two would-be great disciples? What did he mean by his question? What answer did they make? Did they mean it? Then Jesus told them that places of honor would be filled by those who most deserved them. And who were they? Who, did he say, were the great ones in the Kingdom? Those are first who are always thinking of others, not of themselves, who are always trying to do something for others. Every one can be great in that way. The greatest One of all is Jesus himself. What did he say he came to do?

The Best Seats

In colonial times it was customary to "seat the meeting-house," or "dignify the seats," as it was also called, by a committee appointed for the purpose. This committee decided how many seats should be considered of the first dignity, and, when there were not seats enough for those who had equal claims, an extra seat was solemnly voted of equal dignity, and the fact was announced from the pulpit on Sunday. In the earliest days all were equally poor, and the seats were allotted solely on the ground of age, the dignified seats belonging to the oldest. Later the possession of property had to be taken into account, and lists were made of those whose possessions entitled them to consideration. At Southington, as Herman Temlow tells us in his sketches, it was voted in 1799 that fifteen pounds were equal to one year of age in rank. A man of thirty, for example, who was rated at three hundred pounds on the list, could sit among men of fifty who were not so rich as he. The decisions of the committees received much criticism, and there is a vote on record at Southington that the committee who last seated the meeting-house be instructed to reconsider their seating, and "if upon a full investigation they find that they have seated some more Higher than their age and the List carried them, and others lower, to make alterations as appear Just and Right."

Has any of that early New England spirit lingered until this day in some of our churches? Have you ever felt it?

What is True Greatness?

What is true greatness, and who are the great? If a small child should come to you with this question, how would you answer him? By what standards would you measure greatness?

A small boy in my Sunday school class came to church one morning, very blue and sad. "What is the trouble?" I asked. "Didn't you know that So-and-So died yesterday?" he replied, quoting the name of a movie hero. "He sure was a great feller," the boy added. The actor was famous; his name often appeared in the papers and was emblazoned on the front of theater buildings throughout the

country. He had thrilled the hearts of many boys, and to them he was the hero which his screen presentations always pictured him to be. Would you consider his fame as a movie actor a determining factor in setting up a measurement for greatness? Is fame alone sufficient?

A few years ago a citizen of New York offered the sum of $1,200 to be awarded in prizes for the twelve best essays on world heroes, the essentials of heroism to be (1) nobility of character, (2) fearless and self-sacrificing devotion to a worthy cause, and (3) constructive work for humanity of a permanent character. What do you think of these standards by which to judge greatness? If you accept them, what world heroes would you say were eligible for a place among the great? The following were chosen in the contest: Louis Pasteur, Abraham Lincoln, Christopher Columbus, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Woodrow Wilson, Florence Nightingale, Joan of Arc, Socrates, Johann Gutenberg, David Livingstone, and George Stephenson. Do you think all of these people were representatives of true greatness? What other names might be considered?

How does this measurement square with Jesus' declaration that if one would be great he must be servant of all? Do you think that Lincoln, Livingstone, and the others mentioned above exemplified in their own lives what Jesus meant by true greatness? What about some of the people in your own community, state, and nation?—The Congregationalist's Bible Class.

Marked for a Mast

"As we came up the beautiful Sebat Lake last week (so a church school teacher wrote to one of her pupils, as told by Margaret W. Eggleston in Fireside Stories), I saw something that reminded me of you so strongly that I must tell you of it. Away off in the distance, we saw some wonderful pines that towered high above the rest. They seemed so tall that we spoke to the pilot of the boat about them and he told us this story about them.

"'Years and years ago, before this land was settled by any but the Indians, King George of England sent men to this country to look for tall trees that would make good masts for his ships. They went up the rivers and lakes looking everywhere for the special trees. Here on these hills they found these great trees. So the men marked "K.G." on the trees, charted them on a map which they carried, and went on their way. But for some reason they were never cut and carried away to be used on his ships. There they stand today, strong and straight, marked for masts.'

"After the old man had finished his story and had left us, I said to my friend, 'Marked for a mast because it is straight and strong. I have a girl who also is marked for a mast and some day she will carry with her, under her colors, many boys and girls. We are sending her to the leaders' conference this summer so that she may begin to make ready for her work.' Mary, dear, it is wonderful to have been chosen by the King of England and to have been marked for use with his initials, but it is more wonderful to have been chosen by a greater King and marked with his name. Perhaps you can guess what the mark I see on you might be—it is C.L.—Christian Leader."

Sentence Sermons

Beware of too sublime a sense
Of your own worth and consequence.—Cowper.

Once I thought to sit so high
In the palace of the sky;
Now I thank God for his grace
If I may fill the lowest place.—Christina Rossetti.

"The law of the King is service
And the highest serve the most."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Where was Bethphage? 2. Has Jesus a right to ask that our possessions be used in his service? 3. On what day of the week was the Triumphal Entry, and how many days before the Crucifixion? 4. What do we call the day, and why? 5. Who were some of the people who acclaimed Jesus? 6. Are you loyal to Jesus your King? 7. What ways have you of showing loyalty to your King?

LESSON VI—MAY 11

JESUS ACCLAIMED AS KING

GOLDEN TEXT: Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. Matthew 21.9

LESSON Matthew 20.29 to 21.46 DEVOTIONAL READING Hebrews 1.8-12

Matthew 21.1 And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem and came unto Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, 2 saying unto them, Go into the village that is over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose *them*, and bring *them* unto me. 3 And if any one say aught unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. 4 Now this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet, saying,

5 Tell ye the daughter of Zion,
Behold, thy King cometh unto thee,
Meek, and riding upon an ass,
And upon a colt the foal of an ass.

6 And the disciples went, and did even as Jesus appointed them, 7 and brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their garments; and he sat thereon. 8 And the most part of the multitude spread their garments in the way; and others cut branches from the trees, and spread them in the way. 9 And the multitudes that went before him, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. 10 And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, Who is this? 11 And the multitudes said, This is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. JESUS RESTORES THE SIGHT OF TWO BLIND MEN, 20.29-34.

II. PREPARATIONS FOR THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY, 21.1-6. When Jesus and the crowd with him approached Bethphage, on the Mount of Olives not far from Jerusalem, he sent two disciples on ahead to make preparations for entering the city, bidding them find in the village an ass tied, and a colt with her, which they were to loose and bring to him. If the owner objected they were merely to say, "The Lord hath need of them," and he would send them. The horse was the symbol of war; the ass the fitting symbol of the Prince of Peace.

Matthew adds that this was done in fulfilment of Zechariah 12.14-16. Recall our note about Matthew's fulfilments of prophecy, page 22. The words of Zechariah emphasize the meekness of the King: there was no pretentiousness in riding into Jerusalem on the foal of an ass.

It was only a humble animal, a beast of burden, of which the Lord had need; when he celebrated the Passover feast in Jerusalem his need was for an upper room; and each time there was a faithful follower ready and glad to supply the need. When he fed the five thousand he had need of a few loaves and fishes, and it was a boy who served him with this humble gift.

III. THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY, 21.7-11. The disciples followed instructions and brought the ass. They put their loose outer robes upon it for Jesus to sit upon, and the multitude with them spread their garments in the way or cut branches from the trees and spread them down for Jesus to travel over. "Some have ridiculed the idea of spreading branches on the road as offering incredible obstructions and dangers; and yet the orthodox custom in Russia, in a funeral procession, is to spread the route with branches of fir" (W. A. Grist). Because of John 12.13, it has been generally supposed that the branches were palm branches, although John only mentions the fact that the people came out from Jerusalem to meet Jesus bearing branches of palm. We know from Revelation 7.9 that palms were carried as symbols of victory and rejoicing.

John tells us that many people, excited by the news of the raising of Lazarus (which he records), hurried from Jerusalem to meet and do honor to Jesus, while following with Jesus was this other multitude of Galileans on their way to Jerusalem to keep the Passover. Both crowds united in crying, "Hosanna to the Son of David." Compare Psalm 118.25, 26, a part of the great Passover hymn, or Hallel, sung by the Jews on their great pilgrimages to Jerusalem. *Hosanna* is the Greek form of the Hebrew word translated in Psalm 118 as *save now,* where it is a prayer for help and guidance. As used in the triumphal entry of Jesus it seems to have become

a word of greeting, like our word *Hail.* "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord": blessed is the Messiah, who comes by the authority of God. "Hosanna in the highest": all hail in heaven.

And when they reached Jerusalem all the people there, "frozen with formalism and socially undemonstrative," were stirred by the popular enthusiasm and asked "Who is this?" "This is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee," was the answer of those who came with him. Dr. J. W. Dawson suggests that they are no longer willing to call him King who has wept at the moment of his triumph (Luke 19.41-44) and has uttered woes when he should have uttered the triumphant cry of the victorious captain. They may safely call him prophet, but they will give him no more regal title.

In one of his sermons Phillips Brooks thus discusses the attitude of the various people in Jerusalem at the triumphal entry of Jesus:

"The simple-minded people came streaming out to meet him. The thoughtful, puzzled students, not hostile, with some degree of sympathy, sat at home listening to the tumult and wondering whether it could possibly be that this was "He of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write." Those whom he had cured of sickness blessed him anew as they heard of his approach. Those who had believed in him felt their faith deepen anew in the people's idol. 'Have any of the Pharisees believed on him?' they said over and over to one another. The priests hugged their traditions closer and said, 'There is nothing about him here.' There were groups of Sadducees who looked with a sort of superior pity upon the whole transaction. They turned aside to let the host sweep by, and then looked after it and shook their heads, with that sort of pity which is at the soul of the intensest pride. The pride that hates is never so intensely supercilious and proud as the pride that pities. There were those, too, who hated Christ; some people whom he interfered with; some people who felt that they could not live in the same city with him—that either he or they must give way and go out. There were the Pharisees, who saw in Jesus the contradicition of all their most treasured traditions and favorite ideas; and there were the sinners whom he had rebuked for all their different kinds of sins. The Pharisee said, 'If what this Teacher says is true, all that I say is false.' The sinner said, 'If what this Master commands is right, my life is horrible.' Between each of these men and Jesus there was war to the death. One or the other of them must yield or die. The lordly Romans stalked by superciliously, hardly deigning to glance at the passing procession, only wondering what these absurd, fantastic Hebrews would do next. Each man, according to his nature, answered to the coming of Christ. It was like the judgment day."

"Let us set our own soul on that rocky hill and see Christ come to it. Long heard of, not a stranger, having often passed before our sight, at last he comes finally and formally to claim us for his own, solemnly to assert that we belong to him, to bid us make our choice whether we will take him for our King or not. Such days do come to all of us—days when we feel as if the Savior, who had been long tempting us, had gathered up all his power of appeal and expected to be then either accepted or rejected; days when the chance of the new spiritual life seems to stand with peculiar solemnity before our heart. Such days are to us what Palm Sunday was to Jerusalem. He loves us as he loved that city, with a love full of reproach and accusation. Every heart has to decide. Jerusalem had to decide. Before the week was over she had decided. On Friday she crucified Christ. Still even round the cross there were love and faith and lamentation. But they were crushed and only heard in sobs. The hatred had triumphed, and Jerusalem had crucified her King. And so must every Jerusalem decide. So must your heart say finally to Jesus, 'Come,' or 'Go.' He never will go until you obstinately bid him. He cannot come into the inmost temple until you welcome him" (Phillips Brooks).

IV. THE TRADERS CAST OUT OF THE TEMPLE THEY WERE PROFANING, 21.12-14.

V. THE HOMAGE OF THE CHILDREN AND THE INDIGNATION OF THE PRIESTS, 21.15, 16.

VI. THE CURSING OF THE FIG TREE, 21.17-22.

VII. THE OBJECTION OF THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND ELDERS AND THE PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS, 21.23-32.

VIII. THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED HUSBANDMAN, 21.33-46.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The Lord hath need of them, verse 3. There is a wonderful facility and readiness to both borrow and lend among orientals which is not easy to understand with our more restricted Western usages. They have a very common expression with reference to the rights of private property. They will merely say, "There is no ceremony between you and me." This comment may come from either side of the transaction, and may mean that the owner was perfectly ready to allow the use of his property, or it may mean that the borrower feels quite at liberty to make use of the other's possessions as if they were his own.—William S. Nelson.

Riding upon an ass, verse 5. Oriental nations assigned a very high value to the ass, which is said to have been more stately and handsome in appearance than the ignoble animal of the same kind found in countries farther north. Like the mule, it was preferred to a horse for riding by men of the highest rank. The colt whereon no man ever yet sat, chosen as the conception of purity or fitness for sacred uses, was especially connected in the minds of ancient Jews and Gentiles with an animal that had not yet performed any labor.—Schaeffer.

The most part of the multitude spread their garments upon the way, verse 8. The garments answered instead of fine carpets which oriental people often spread in the path of a king. The One Volume Commentary quotes the saying concerning Rabbi Nicodemus that "whenever he went into the school to lecture, his pupils spread garments of wool under his feet"; and reminds us that in quite recent times the inhabitants of Bethlehem spread their garments on the road, under the feet of the horse of the English Consul of Damascus, whose assistance they were anxious to obtain.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

On his triumphal way from Bethphage, where the ass was secured, Jesus walked over a rocky, winding road on the slope of the Mount of Olives, crossed the Brook Kidron, whose narrow ravine separates the Mount from Jerusalem, and entered the city through the Golden Gate.

The Triumphal Entry was an assertion of Jesus' Kingship. He deliberately planned for it: why? In his public ministry he had often cautioned some one not to report a miracle wrought, or had charged the disciples to "tell no man that he is the Christ." After the feeding of the five thousand he hid among the hills to escape the people who would make him King. He seemed constantly to fear that popular enthusiasm would hinder his work of teaching. Now, however, he no longer dreads interruption to his work. His hour is come. He knows his end is near. He seeks publicity, courts the enthusiastic applause of the people, lets the world know that he is the Messiah. It is his last appeal to the nation that he loves.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

"Palm Sunday may be made a day of spiritual power in the life of the church school. Especially does it possess elements which appeal to the hearts of youth. The vivid portrayal of the scenes of that first Palm Sunday will evoke a response from the children and young people as certainly as the events themselves kindled into flame the latent sentiments of the multitude on Olivet. Luke says expressly that they who burst forth in triumphant praise and rejoicing were 'disciples.' Shall we deny the right of boys and girls who for years have faithfully attended the church school as eager listeners, responsive in spirit and conduct to the teaching they have received—dare we deny them the right to be regarded and to be addressed as his disciples?

"The greatest hindrance to a significant observance of Palm Sunday as acknowledday lies not in our pupils, but in ourselves as teachers and leaders. Careful for the service should be made, but all the while we should do well ind that a large part of the preparation required is the preparation earts. One of the sad things to contemplate is that in many church

schools there are boys and girls who are ready to respond to a sympathetic, understanding appeal to make Jesus Christ once for all Lord of their lives, but are hindered from so doing by a lack of spiritually minded teachers."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

MAKING CHRIST OUR KING

Beginning the Lesson

At the annual Passover celebrations excitement was always intense in and around Jerusalem. "The spirit of patriotic and religious ardor ran like a flame throughout the land. There was no populous city, no remote hamlet, that did not furnish its contingent to what was practically an assembling of the entire nation. These innumerable bands of pilgrims marched upon Jerusalem from every quarter, singing the ancient Psalms of Israel, encouraging in one another a joyous ecstasy, full of eager hopes of some great national deliverance to which the past history of the race, and especially the history of the Passover itself, gave vigorous sanction. It has been calculated that not fewer than a million strangers thus gathered in Jerusalem at the time of the Passover. Camps sprang up outside the walls of Jerusalem; every road leading to the city was thronged with pilgrims, who daily increased in numbers as the solemn day drew near. At this Passover there passed from lip to lip the story of the raising of Lazarus, the rumored marvels of the Galilean ministry, and many proofs of Messiahship which Jesus had given. The interest of the Feast was centered, not in the temple but in him."

How did Jesus prepare for his entry into Jerusalem, and why did he seek the acclaim?

Lessons for Us from the Triumphal Entry

Jesus first laid his hand on a bit of property. Let the ass stand as a modest representative of the material values of the world. The Lord has need of them all. His purpose for the race can only be achieved as these materials are yielded to him in willing consecration. The farms and the mines, the stores and the shops, the railroads and the steamships, must yield to the mastery of his spirit and be administered with reference to the high ends of human well-being which he held steadily in view.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, "all the city was moved." When the spirit and method of his life enters effectively into the life of a modern city, it, too, is moved—moved to higher levels of thought and action. In the progress of his Kingdom the civic interests must finally hail him as Master and cry with all the other forces of a renewed civilization, "Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord."

He went into the place of worship in Jerusalem. He found the temple filled with noisy, dickering traders and money-changers. The place which should stand preëminently for the diffusion of spiritual values had dropped to a low level under the weight of human greed. He rose up in his indignation and drove out the unclean, grasping horde, restoring the atmosphere of sincere devotion, making his Father's house once more "a house of prayer." He thus asserted his mastery over the worship of his nation.

And the last supreme act of the day was to go out to Bethany and lay his hand in blessing upon the most fundamental of all human institutions.

We stand here in the twentieth century better able to appreciate the full royalty of the nature of Christ because of what we have seen in the ages since of the blessed results of his reign. What should be our response? Let it come in a more complete devotement of our total life to this King of kings! Let church and State, market-place and school and, best of all, the home, stand together in glad allegiance before him, crying, "Hosanna! Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord."—Condensed from The Master's Way, by Charles Reynolds Brown.

What Popularity Meant to Jesus

On Palm Sunday Jesus is the most popular Person in Jerusalem. Men would follow him and die for him, if he would but give the word. The tide of popularity ebbs, however, as quickly as it flows, and in four days the same people who were crying "Hosanna" are shouting "Crucify him, crucify him," and, as we read, "their voices prevailed."

No one can live long without observing many instances of this tragedy of popularity, the hero of one year forgotten the next, the applause fading into indifference, the popular judgment swayed by the changing wind of gossip or scandal or self-interest. Popularity ebbs and flows like a tide, and the man who is lifted up by it on a wave of self-conceit finds himself of a sudden stranded on the flats of despair.

How, then, does Jesus meet the shifting breezes of popularity? He seems to be absolutely unconcerned about them. He does not know or care how the wind blows. On Palm Sunday, while the shouts of the people are about him, he stands as if alone on the Mount of Olives and, looking over the valley to Jerusalem, weeps for the sorrows of the city; and on the following Thursday, when the people are crying "Crucify him," again he does not seem to hear them, but goes his way, undisturbed as he was before unflattered, peaceful in blame as in praise, and, standing before Pilate as a criminal, says to him, "I am a king." That is the first teaching of Jesus as he approaches this last week of his life.

We live in a time of extraordinary publicity. Gossip, scandal, praise, and blame beset every life, and many people are tempted to watch for applause or for censure as though they were tests of success. Politicians with their ears to the ground, journalists pandering to popular passion, preachers tickling the public ear,—these are signs of the times which reveal the itching for popularity. Even in our sports we talk of supporting players by organized noise, as though one could not even play a game at his best without dependence on applause. Yet in our time, as always, there is but one kind of man which in the end wins a worthy victory. It is the man who depends neither on praise nor blame. He leads his life instead of following it. There is but one commendation which he desires,—that of his own conscience. He has his Palm Sundays of appreciation, but they do not stir him to self-esteem; he has his Gethsemanes when friends desert him, but they do not depress him to despair. He does his duty and bears his cross; and finally he is remembered, not because he was popular or unpopular, but because he accomplished the work which was given him to do.—Francis Greenwood Peabody, in Mornings in the College Chapel.

The Whole World for the King

How stands it today? What is the range of his Kingdom? In what areas is he to exercise his right? That is a modern question. We have reached a time, when by common Christian consent the Lordship of Jesus, if it is recognized at all, must be recognized as his right to rule in the Scriptures, in the church, in our homes and in all places of our lives. He has every right there to rule for people who follow him.

But has he a wider rule? No one could dream of saying, from the Scriptures—"All authority in heaven and earth"—that he was to be limited in his rule anywhere. That is the meaning of the modern missionary movement. It is strange that for centuries the Christian Church had no sense of obligation for this, that there were churches that denied the obligation which insisted that there was no direct evidence that God wanted his Word to be carried to the end of the earth. We all remember, who study modern history, the storm which arose against the men who pleaded on behalf of the world-wide extension of the Kingdom of our Lord. Men looked at Africa and India and China and those far away places and they heard that his Kingdom had never been so much as mentioned there, that Christ's name was not even known; that other institutions, other religions, other ways of worship, were there in active operation in opposition to what they believed to be his will, and they reached the conclusion, revolutionary in their day, that Christ's government was intended to be exercised in Calcutta just as much as in London; that it was just as much intended for Africa and the ends of the earth as for the most Christianized part of modern Europe or America. I say it was attacked. It was found and felt to be a tremendous thing for men to go out—women, too—by scores and presently by hundreds. They went to the far-off cannibals and to the seats of ancient learning and religion in India. They went to the very centers of population of the earth, believing that Jesus had commanded them so to do, that he had a right to reign there. The hymn that expresses it familiarly to us all is this:

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run."

We have actually in the whole Christian Church claimed the whole world as a field for the activities of Jesus and the Lordship of Christ.

The world will never be right until Christ rules, and it will not do to make him Lord of the Scriptures, Lord of our homes, Lord of our divinity schools and Lord, if you will, of foreign missions, and not express with exactly the same emphasis and the same ideals in every realm of life, that Jesus shall reign wherever men work; Jesus shall reign wherever men play.

I suppose there has scarcely been a more curious case than the case of John Newton, the man who wrote that hymn we all love to sing, "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds,"—a renegade, a man who declared he gave himself over to the devil. He worked a slave vessel. Later he became converted, genuinely converted, a lover of Christ. But he did not give up his slave activities. He was now master of his slave ship, and he took those cargoes and he brought them to desolation and death and servitude. But he let no day pass that he did not call his men to prayer,—not the slaves; just the crew—sing hymns of praise, offer prayers for protection and blessing—this man who could write, "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear. It soothes his sorrow, heals his wounds, and drives away his fears," and not ten feet away were men in that festering den of death and it did not occur to him for many years to see the incongruity of it. That was his world, that ship.

You would say it would be impossible for you to do that. It would be impossible for any Christian, probably, in these days, but that world of his has its analogies in our world in which we live. It is still possible for a man to be a Christian in certain areas of his life and a stark pagan in other areas.—Condensed from a Sermon by Dr. Endicott.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The testimony of the New Testament to the lordship of Christ. The testimony of the Church throughout nineteen centuries.

2. The sovereignty of Jesus. See pages 413-420 of Paterson-Smyth's People's Life of Christ.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Who were the Pharisees, Herodians, Sadducees? 2. What benefit did the Jews derive from Roman rulers? 3. What was Jesus' attitude toward established law? 4. What is yours? 5. What is your opinion of a man who makes false statements in his income tax report? 6. Of a man who does not observe the Eighteenth Amendment? 7. What can we do to help enforce our laws?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

MAKING CHRIST OUR KING

Beginning the Lesson

It was a glad day when General Allenby entered Jerusalem. The procession was marked with the greatest simplicity. The General was on foot, dressed in his ordinary service uniform, and he carried no arms. What a contrast to that pompous entry of the Holy City made nearly twenty years earlier by the then German Kaiser! He had had the Turks tear down a part of the ancient wall at the Jaffa Gate—that wall which had been standing all those centuries—in order that he might enter on horseback! There was intense excitement in the Holy City when the British army entered. Every day for a week there were celebrations and feastings. Some of the Jews wanted to collect money at once to erect a monument to General Allenby. The Jewish Council of the city organized a procession of children who, with flags and palm branches and singing, went to the British authorities to express gratitude for the deliverance of the city.

Today we study that wonderful entrance of the city by Jesus and his followers eighteen hundred years ago. Let us see if we cannot picture it vividly to ourselves.

Jesus the King

Dr. Robert F. Horton, in the Introduction to his book entitled The Hero of Heroes, writes:

I know a house where, over the mantelpiece, is a print of Leonardo da Vinci's famous picture of the Last Supper, the picture now faded and defaced on the wall of the refectory in the convent of S Maria delle Grazie, at Milan.

In the house was a little boy of four, and no one had ever shown him the picture or said anything about it to him.

One day he suddenly said to his mother: "There's a King in that picture."

"What do you mean, John?" said his mother.

"There's a King in that picture," he repeated.

She picked him up in her arms and took him to the mantelpiece, and then he put his tiny finger on the figure of Jesus in the center of the picture.

Jesus is seated at the table, and has just said to the twelve apostles that one of them will betray him. He wears no sign of kingship except the expression on his face. But that child had seen the King.

In all our lessons of the year we have seen the King, I hope, for he shows his kingliness in everything he does and says. And I hope we can all say in our hearts:

"'Tis the Lord! O wondrous story!
'Tis the Lord, the King of glory!
At his feet we humbly fall;
Crown him, crown him Lord of all!"

Make Christ Absolute Ruler

"I was a Christian before I came to Keswick, Christ was then my King," said a Christian worker in London. "But," he added, "I fear he was only a constitutional sovereign, and I was his prime minister. Now he is absolute Lord, and that has made a great difference in my life, and has brought me a great blessing."

Our Resolve

Jesus Christ is our Lord and King. It is no lightly-made recognition of his Kingship and of his claims upon us that we now make, for it is our fixed resolve that we will be his loyal subjects, that we will let him govern our lives in all things, that we will follow him now and always.

How to Follow in the Footsteps of our King

There was a King in Nazareth;
(Men did not know he was a King)
By humble ways he went about,
With love for everything.

He had no crown, but he was kind;
He had no throne; but he was strong;
Good deeds he did, and loving words
He said, the whole day long.

By gentle thought and loving words
And deeds of kindness, day by day,
Our feet can follow where he went,
Along the lowly way.—Nancy Byrd Turner.

Sentence Sermons

Tell it out, the Lord is King;
Tell it out in accents clear,
Message meant for every land,
Message meant for every ear,
Light and love and life to bring,
Tell it out, the Lord is King.—William Saumarez Smith.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Who governed the Jews at the time of our lesson? 2. What benefits did the Jews enjoy from the government? 3. What is a tribute, or tax? 4. How were the taxes levied by the Roman Government collected, as we learned in our lesson about the call of Matthew? 5. Who was the Cæsar? 6. How did the Pharisees think their question would "ensnare" Jesus? 7. How did his answer show great skill? 8. What did Jesus teach in regard to respect for law? 9. What duties of citizenship can boys and girls fulfil?

JESUS TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE (Temperance Lesson)

GOLDEN TEXT: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Matthew 22.37-39

LESSON Matthew 22.1 to 23.39 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 15

MATTHEW 22.15 Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might ensnare him in *his* talk. 16 And they send to him their disciples, with the Herodians, saying, Teacher, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, and carest not for anyone: for thou regardest not the person of men. 17 Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not? 18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why make ye trial of me, ye hypocrites? 19 Show me the tribute of money. And they brought unto him a denarius. 20 And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? 21 They say unto him, Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's. 22 And when they heard it, they marvelled, and left him, and went away.

34 But the Pharisees, when they heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, gathered themselves together. 35 And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, trying him: 36 Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? 37 And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second like *unto it* is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. 40 On these two commandments the whole law hangeth and the prophets.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE PARABLE OF THE MARRIAGE FEAST, 22.1-14.

II. THE PHARISEES' QUESTION ABOUT TRIBUTE, 22.15-22. Then—after listening to Christ's parables which were plainly a warning to them; see Matthew 21.45—the Pharisees took counsel how they might ensnare him in his talk, hoping to lead him on to say something which they could report as treason and thus secure from the Roman Governor a death sentence for him. They took counsel with the Herodians, whom they hated, but their common hatred of Jesus was stronger than their mutual hatred. The Herodians were the court party, a political party that came into existence with the rise to power of Herod the Great. Their desire was to have a Jewish kingdom established under the Herodian dynasty. The Pharisees were the strictest religious sect among the Jews, and were bitterly opposed to Roman rule. They were looking for a Messiah who should be their earthly king and free them from Roman domination.

Cherish hatred and it will in time absorb all other feelings, and will expend itself, not upon the object of your hatred, but in the ruin of your soul.

Pharisees and Herodians together came to Jesus and began their attack with a preamble which meant that the question they were about to propose was a dangerous one to answer, but they knew he was not afraid of consequences. The words were intended to conciliate him and put him off his guard, but it was nevertheless a fine tribute to Jesus from his enemies when they said that he was true, that he taught the truth, and was fearless in his preaching of the truth.

Since he was such an one as they had said, they wanted his judgment on a matter of controversy: Did he deem it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar? "Cæsar" was the title given to all Roman rulers, just as "Kaiser" was formerly the title of all German rulers and "Czar" of all Russian rulers. The reigning emperor at this time was Tiberius, and the tribute was the poll-tax levied by the Romans. If Jesus answered that it was lawful to give tribute, the people would turn against him; and if he said it was not lawful, he could be charged with treason. The motive back of the question was evil, the sole object being to get Jesus into trouble, but the question itself was a burning one. The Pharisees held with Judas of Galilee, the founder of the party of the Zealots, who declared that it was unlawful for Israel, as a theocracy, rightly subject only to the rule of God, to pay tribute to any foreign power. Jesus saw through their purpose and exclaimed, "Why

make ye trial of me, ye hypocrites?" Jesus could always see the insincerity of the would-be flatterer.

Spurgeon declares that we are all pervious to flattery; we all like the soothing cordial, only it must not be labeled flattery, for we have a righteous abhorrence of flattery if it be so-called; call it by any other name, and we drink it in.

Then Jesus asked for a coin, the tribute money. They brought him a denarius, a coin worth about eight pence half penny, as the Bible margin tells us, that about seventeen cents of our money, but it was a day's wage at that time. Strict Jews would not carry a denarius, for they held that the emperor's image upon it savored of idolatry, but one could be easily obtained from the money-changers. "Whose is this image and superscription?" Jesus asked. They must perforce answer, "Cæsar's." "Render, therefore, unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," returned Jesus. "If a king's coin is current in a country, the men of that country do thereby evidence that they acknowledge him as lord," said the Talmud. The right of coinage involved the right of taxation. *Render* means *give back*. The coin came from Cæsar, and they owed him something in return. They received benefits from Cæsar's rule—the *pax Romana* (Roman peace) was a blessing to the whole Roman world, and in return for law and protection the government had a right to levy taxes.

"And unto God the things that are God's," Jesus solemnly added. There are political and there are religious obligations, and, while discharging the duties imposed upon them by human conditions, they must never lose sight of the duties imposed upon them by their relationship to God. "The effect of Jesus' answer was to convict both parties of unreality, to place the issue at stake on a high plane, to disallow as irrelevant most of the pleas and counter-pleas of the long controversy between them."

When Florence Nightingale was asked the secret of her life, her reply was, "I have worked hard, very hard, that is all; and I have never refused anything to God."

The efforts of his enemies to ensnare Jesus in his talk ended in their own confusion: they marvelled, and left him, and went away.

"What strikes us so much in this and other conversations where our Lord is challenged, is not simply that he has balked his adversaries. Others could do that. But, in addition, he invariably brought more truth and light and made it shine more brightly. With us controversy often muddies the water. In his hands, it made the water only more clear" (R. C. Gillie).

III. THE SADDUCEES' QUESTION ABOUT THE RESURRECTION, 22.23-33.

IV. THE LAWYER'S QUESTION ABOUT THE GREAT COMMANDMENT, 22.34-40. Here the lawyer seems to be one of the hostile Pharisees who would put Jesus to the test, but as the account is given in Mark 12.28-34 he seems not to be hostile to Jesus and to have had no ulterior motive in his question. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" was the question he put to Jesus, and if prompted not by curiosity but by conscience, it may have been, as Dr. Stalker says, an inquiry as to what it is that really matters in the eyes of God. Jesus' answer was: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," wholly, perfectly, with all thy power; "and a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," Lev. 19.18. "As thyself" means "not in the same degree but after the same manner, i.e., freely and readily, sincerely and unfeignedly, tenderly and compassionately, constantly and perseveringly."

"'Thou shalt love,' says Jesus. Sympathy, appreciation, magnanimity, are not luxuries, but obligations. You have no right to be sulky, suspicious, lawless. Apply the will to the affections. You may be called to be unhappy, but you are never called to be unloving" (Francis G. Peabody).

On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets. "That is, the moral drift of the whole Old Testament is love; there is no law or performance of law of any value save as love is the soul of it. So Jesus soars away far

above the petty disputes of the schools about the relative worth of isolated precepts" (Charles R. Brown). Recall the scribe's appreciation of Jesus' answer, as Mark 12.32-34 records it, and Jesus' commendation, "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God."

V. JESUS' QUESTION ABOUT THE CHRIST, 22.41-46.

VI. PHARISAISM EXPOSED AND DENOUNCED, 23.1-36.

VII. JESUS' LAMENT OVER JERUSALEM, 23.37-39.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Is it lawful to render tribute unto Cæsar? verse 17. Under the Herodians the royal revenue seems to have been derived from crown lands, from a property and income tax, from import and export duties, and from a duty on all that was publicly sold or bought, to which must be added a tax upon houses in Jerusalem.

Heavily as these exactions must have weighed upon a comparatively poor and chiefly agricultural population, they refer only to civil taxation, not to religious dues. But, even so, we have not exhausted the list of contributions demanded of a Jew. For every town and community levied its own taxes for the maintenance of synagogue, elementary schools, public baths, the support of the poor, the maintenance of public roads, city walls, and gates, and other general requirements.—Alfred Edersheim, in Sketches.

Whose is the image and superscription? verse 20. Throughout the Roman Empire Cæsar claimed and received divine honors, save in Palestine alone. Caligula was the only Cæsar who attempted to force the Jews to worship his image. As Dr. Geikie tells us in New Testament Hours: "It was reckoned enough that two lambs and an ox were offered twice a day in the temple 'for Cæsar and the Roman people'; whether at the cost of the emperor or of the sanctuary is uncertain. On extraordinary occasions, moreover, the Jewish authorities expressed their loyalty by special sacrifices for the emperor. Next to the worship of the Cæsar, his effigy on the coins and military standards was abhorrent to the Jews, and care was taken not to offend their prejudices on these points. It was impossible however, to avoid the circulation of Roman denarii in Judea bearing the imperial 'image and superscription,' for no gold or silver money was coined in Palestine. On locally coined copper money, only the name of Cæsar and innocent emblems were to be seen."

A Jewish Coin

A Roman Coin

One of them, a lawyer, verse 35. Long before the time of our Savior, the law, written and oral, had become the absolute norm of Jewish life. Every detail of life, civil as well as religious, was regulated in the minutest manner by the law. It was impossible for the ordinary Jew to be fully acquainted with the innumerable statutes referring, e.g., to Levitical purity or the keeping of the Sabbath, and to apply them to the fresh cases that emerged daily; and yet his standing before God depended upon his scrupulous observance of these statutes. It was necessary, therefore, that a special class of men should devote themselves expressly to the study of the law. These were the "scribes," "lawyers," or "doctors of the law."—Hastings' Bible Dictionary.

Which is the great commandment in the law? verse 36. According to the scribes there were three hundred and sixty-five prohibitions and two hundred and twenty-eight commandments in the Pentateuch, and which of these was the greatest was a common dispute. The first great commandment which Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy was repeated by the Jews in their morning and evening prayers, was inscribed in the phylacteries which the Pharisees wore on their foreheads, and was enclosed in the Mezzuzah, which was nailed to the door posts.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

What the Roman Power Had Done for Palestine

The Romans gave peace to the world, and by their thorough administration they

multiplied its commerce and its wealth. The world was not a new one, but, to use the famous figure of Pliny, the Romans were a new day, a new sun, to it. The Roman Empire excelled all before it in the construction of roads—long lines of firm highways, fit for wheels as well as animals. The security of the ancient lines of traffic was a matter of care to the provincial governors. Security of travel by land and by sea was immensely increased. The civilized world found itself for the first time under a common system of law. The effect on Judea was manifest. Even Herod, through all the arbitrariness of his government, was constantly referring cases of justice to Augustus. The security, population and wealth of Jerusalem greatly increased.—George Adam Smith.

The Question of Tribute

While some of the Jews regarded their subjection to Roman authority as a deserved punishment meted out to them by God, and some approved it because business and property were more secure, yet the great mass of the people bitterly resented their subjection to Roman rule, for Israel should acknowledge no king but Jehovah. About the time of the birth of Jesus, a Galilean named Judas went about preaching the doctrine that Jehovah was the only Ruler of the Jews and it was sinning against him to pay tribute to a foreigner. The doctrine became very popular with a people steeped in hatred of foreigners. They were the Chosen People; freedom was theirs by right. "Shall we pay tribute to Cæsar or not?" was a question constantly raised and was equivalent to another question, "Shall we rise in rebellion?"

Whose Is the Image and Superscription? *Titian*

The Time and Place

The place was in the temple enclosure, probably one of the porches, and the time was the last Tuesday of Jesus' life.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

In an article in The Youth's Companion upon Training in Good Citizenship, Judge Taft, speaking of children between the ages of six and twelve, says: "It is difficult for a person not intimately and systematically engaged in imparting ideas to boys and girls to know how capable the mind of the ordinary child at that period is of taking in and retaining political conceptions and perceiving the relation between a citizen and the government."

To give a child an idea of what he owes to modern government and to his country one needs but to give him an understanding, as Judge Taft thinks, of the enormous advance that has been made in the comforts and benefits of municipal life furnished by the city or town over those that the people received from the governments of cities and towns in the Middle Ages, even in the Eighteenth Century and the first half of the Nineteenth, in streets, lighting, water, drainage, health, public order, and education, as well as in hospitals, libraries, reading rooms, and various philanthropies and charities.

"Stories of those born and brought up in the neighborhood who have held public office and discharged their duties well, and have gone on to greater prominence, will stimulate the ambition of the child; and the real public service that these men rendered can be made a moral upon which to base an appeal for devotion to duty and for effort in the public interest. Teachers would do well to make excursions with the children to the water works, the fire-engine house, the court-house, the city hall, or to the philanthropic institutions of public and private foundation. They should explain simply where the money comes from with which the work in these institutions and departments is carried on. If they can firmly impress upon the child the fact that public money does not fall from the sky, but that it comes from the people who make up the government, they will establish in his mind a foundation of sanity and sound political views.

"There is a general impression, not confined to children, that the right to vote is the one important feature of civil liberty, whereas it is not a right but a duty, given for the good of all."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

WHO IS A GOOD CITIZEN

Beginning the Lesson

Begin with The Historical Background and Explanations and Comments.

Doing One's Duty as a Christian

He who does not do his duty in this world will never do his duty in any world. He who does not do his duty to his brother will never do his duty to his God. I am bound to put my whole strength and energy and wisdom into my business. To be a lackadaisical, half-hearted, so taken up with things above as to be slipshod in my dealings with things below, is to serve neither God nor man, to serve neither this world nor the next. Because I am a Christian I am bound to be earnest, and indeed enthusiastic in all that makes for the welfare of the place in which I live and of the people about me and of the nation to which I belong. He will never do his duty as a Christian who does not do his duty as a citizen. I am unworthy of my liberties unless I seek to extend to others the good that has been conferred upon me. Surely there is nothing more cowardly than that which seems to say: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, to run away from it."—Mark Guy Pearse.

The Christian Citizen's Responsibility for Governmental Affairs

Every Bible Class ought to have some personal touch with the city. The average person believes in good government and is willing to have good government. You do not need to argue with a man that it is better to have an efficient police force than one that is inefficient. It is another thing to get him to take enough interest in the community to become acquainted with its officials, and to know intimately and in detail the actual situation in regard to the budget, the city council, the school system, the water supply, and other details that go to make up the city's government and add to the welfare and comfort of the citizens. What are the conditions in your own city, village or town? Do you know your officials? Is there talk of graft, mismanagement of affairs, or shady political dealings? Are these reports just gossip? In fact, do you know anything about the conditions? To be able to answer such questions as these is the very beginning of wisdom in civic affairs. To take no interest in such things is not only unpatriotic—it is unchristian as well.—Henry A. Atkinson, in The Home Department Magazine.

Religion and Politics

Some people conceive of religion as something they can do on Sundays just as they do other business on other days of the week. Real religion, that dealing with God to which we come through Christ, is an activity which enters into and gives quality and direction to everything we do every hour of every day.

It must then come into politics as well as into everything else. If a man's politics are not affected by his religion there must be something seriously wrong with the way in which he conceives of and practises religion. Politics, as it concerns him, is his share in the Government and social organization of his country.

It may seem strange that Christian men, who seek to bring their religion to bear

upon their politics in this way, do not all arrive at the same political conclusions and work together for the same political ends. It is really no more strange than that Christian doctors do not agree as to the best methods of dealing with disease. Christianity does not give us short cuts to truth, though it gives new motives for the discovery of it. The facts about men and human nature with which politics have to do, and the inferences as to human duty which follow from those facts, can only be arrived at by much patience, and, as in other matters of knowledge there is bound to be controversy. The Christian Church ought to be large-minded and large-hearted enough to find room within itself for those on every side in such controversy, giving them the inspiration to do their part well in the search for the truth as to the good ordering of Society.

What then about politics in the pulpit? The Christian pulpit ought to say like the old Stoic, "I count nothing that is human foreign to me," since God has claimed all human interests as his own, to be redeemed by his grace. But those who are shy of politics in the pulpit have two things to be said on their side. First, that the preacher is generally not an expert in political questions and is apt to speak of them, if he does so, after insufficient study of facts. And second, that the opportunities of Christian preaching are so rare and so short that the time for it is generally best spent in drawing people's attention to those facts of God's historical revelation of himself from which, if they are practically believed, will be derived those principles and that spirit which can direct into right ways of political thought and action.—H. C. Carter, in The New Chronicle.

The Church and the Eighteenth Amendment

When the minister of a church of Worcester, Mass., spoke openly against a certain candidate for high office on the ground of his friendliness to the liquor traffic, a member of his church circulated a petition to the board of assessors requesting that the church be deprived of the tax exemption privilege and be taxed as a political organization. His object, he said, was "to put a stop if possible to political agitation in the churches." And there are the anti-prohibition forces that are constantly denouncing the Anti-saloon League as a kind of theocracy, and Catholic (and sometimes other) writers who describe the Methodist Board of Temperance and Social Welfare with its Washington office as a church lobby to intimidate the civil government. There is no way to keep unwise people from doing unwise things, even if they are members of the church, and it is doubtless true that propaganda for good causes has not always been conducted in an ideal way. But that the church has no word to say with reference to these problems of social and political life which are at bottom problems of morality is a monstrous doctrine. When the church enters the field of political action in a democratic country, it must enter it as a democratic organization not subject to bureaucratic or hierarchical domination, but enter it must at those points at which political attitudes have moral and spiritual significance. Fear is expressed that the church will become "more than a church"—a political club. It need not become that. But a church which fears to take a stand upon a matter of social morality because it has become a political issue is less than a church.—Editorial in The Christian Century.

An Acceptable "Liturgy"

In ancient Athens—the most remarkable little State that ever existed—the great and wealthy citizens were accustomed, almost as a matter of course, to make great presents to the State. One of them would defray the expenses of the public games, another would present a ship to the State, and another a building. They vied with each other in giving to the State their wealth. That kind of presentation was called in Athens *leitourgia,* which is exactly the word we reproduce in our "liturgy." We have altered the meaning, but that was the original connotation of "liturgy"—a duty, a service, a gift by a private citizen to the public. It would be a very acceptable liturgy, as well as a service immediately recognized by the whole population, if rich men felt this obligation today, if they would enter into the spirit which prompted this particular gift, and feel it an obvious duty. We want to bring the rich man to understand that not by the involuntary offering of taxes and super-taxes, but by the voluntary gift of what he possesses, is he entitled to the possession of wealth. You remember how our Lord, while he censured the rich man who proposed to pull down his barns and build greater, and was called upon to die that night, commends all through the man, whoever he is, who uses

money, as he calls it, to make "friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." This may be called the political economy of Christ. His view of wealth, his view of private wealth, his view, we may suppose, of the wealth of nations, may be expressed in this way—that it is good to make wealth, but not to keep it; its use is to bless and help the community, because it is only by the community and the common life that wealth can be made and kept secure.—R. F. Horton.

For Bible Class Discussion

Can a line be drawn between politics and religion? Does religion have to do with all activities? Is true religion ever a departmental thing? Should a Christian include among his obligations the right use of his vote and his political influence? Have politics a rightful place in the pulpit? What sort of politics? Are the majority of ministers qualified to speak upon certain phases of politics?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Describe the lamps and oil vessels used at this time. 2. What does the extra supply of oil in the parable signify? 3. Ought the wise virgins to have shared their oil with the foolish ones? 4. What was the purpose of this parable? 5. What is Christian preparedness?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

HOW TO BECOME A GOOD CITIZEN

Beginning the Lesson

Grace Winter writes the following interesting dialogue as an introduction to our lesson:

"He of Nazareth is making the usual upset amongst the people. We can make no headway against him. All the world is gone after him," said Enos, the scribe, as he paced the temple courts one morning during the Passover week. Rabbi Baruch turned a lowering brow on the speaker. "You say truly," he muttered angrily, "all the world is gone after him! He blames us for this and that, and holds us up to public scorn. We are losing all our influence with the common people. I hate him, and shall have no peace till he is—dead!" The two friends paced silently for a moment or two, and then the scribe added, in a lighter tone:

"We are sending up two separate parties of men to ask him questions tomorrow. They will try, if possible, to put him to confusion before the people, and whatever answer he may give, there will be someone to find fault with it."

"Have you decided upon your questions?" asked the rabbi.

"Yes, and we have got some of Herod's men to ask the first. They will want to know if he thinks it right to pay the Roman tax," and Enos smiled an evil smile.

"I see," said Baruch thoughtfully. "If he says 'No,' they will get a warrant for his arrest as a rebel from the Roman governor, and if he says 'Yes,' the people will be angry, for they hate the tax."

How did the enemies of Jesus carry out their plan? How did it succeed? What do you think Jesus would have us do as citizens?

Getting Ready for Citizenship

A striking cartoon issued during the Great War pictures Uncle Sam stooping under a heavy load which is marked "Responsibility for the Future Civilization." Before him stands a youth holding an iron dumb-bell which has made him perspire profusely, and the object is labelled "High School." At his feet lie two other dumb-bells, one a small one marked "Grammar School," and the other a large one marked "College." The boy is pointing to the little one and saying, "Isn't that one enough? It is pretty heavy!" But Uncle Sam replies, "No, my boy; keep right on! You are my greatest hope. When you're strong enough I'll need you to help carry this load."

"The responsibility for the future of civilization is a much heavier load than any of us realize," a college professor observes. "Unless somebody is able to bear it up, dark ages are ahead of us. It will rest more heavily upon the shoulders of Uncle Sam than upon any other shoulders.

"But who is Uncle Sam? You and I are Uncle Sam. Who will be Uncle

Sam tomorrow? The boys and girls in our schools today will be Uncle Sam tomorrow.

"How many of these boys and girls will have the honor of helping to carry that great burden of civilization? Those that can think clearly, and act wisely, and lead others.

"And how shall they learn to thus think, and lead? As the cartoon indicates, by remaining in school until their minds are developed and trained to heavy tasks."

A Talk from John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

Character implies obedience to law, irrespective of whether one likes the law, believes in it, or is opposed to it. How well known to all of us are instances of lawbreaking like the following: Here is a woman who says: "I don't believe in the customs law. It is foolish and unwarranted. Therefore I feel perfectly justified in smuggling." With equal propriety says the footpad, "This law against highway robbery cramps my style and forces me to the unwelcome alternative of earning an honest living." And he holds up the next automobile that passes. Another illustration of this same attitude is the feeling on the part of many people that the Eighteenth Amendment is an infringement of personal liberty and therefore its observance is purely optional. To my way of thinking it is absolutely on all fours with the cases cited above.

Youth and the Prohibition Law

A Persian student at Wooster College, Hessamedin Shafa by name, addressed these words to the young people of America:

"America is the laboratory in which the success or failure of prohibition must be worked out. We cannot believe that America will turn back. Once having lighted the torch, she will bear it aloft. And other nations will come and receive fire from it, so that in time to come the whole world shall be lighted. The task is not yet done. There are many hard battles to be fought. Therefore I appeal to the younger generation, to the youth of the United States and of the world, reminding them that their actions shall to a large degree determine the destiny of the human race."

"How will young people answer?" an editorial in The Religious Journal of Education asks, and then adds:

"According to the wet press of our great cities they are answering Mr. Shafa only by a hiccough and a hip-flask. But that is not all. Here are some other answers:

"Leaders of five million Sunday-school youth join with a dozen other youth agencies in stressing Law Enforcement as one of the three great goals for the next few years. The World League against alcoholism launches a youth movement in behalf of prohibition. The Intercollegiate Prohibition Association has chapters in many lands for a scientific study of the liquor problem and coöperation with adults for universal prohibition. Four million Christian Endeavorers join in a crusade for a moral and dry world. Boys and girls in Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. groups everywhere are enthusiastically declaring themselves for these same principles. In the city of Toronto, during a wet vs. dry election the youth throng the halls where their rallies are held to declare where they stand and to protest against 'wet' assertions that youth is all on the damp side of the issue.

"Such are some indications as to the answer of youth. And when the issue is finally brought to its hour of crucial decision, youth will have to be reckoned with—for good or ill."

Sentence Sermons

It is incumbent upon every person of every description to contribute to his country's welfare.—George Washington.

There is no perfect Christian who is not also a perfect patriot.—Cardinal Mercier.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. How many chapters in Matthew's Gospel tell about the last week of Christ's life? 2. What is a parable? 3. What parables have we already studied this year? 4. In the interpretation of this parable, who is the bridegroom? 5. Who are the wise virgins? 6. Who are the foolish? 7. What is the lesson of the parable? 8. How can one best "watch"?

JESUS DESCRIBES THE FUTURE OF THE KINGDOM

GOLDEN TEXT: Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. Mark 13.33

LESSON Matthew 24.1 to 25.13 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 55.1-3, 6-8

Matthew 25.1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3 For the foolish, when they took their lamps, took no oil with them: 4 but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 Now while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. 6 But at midnight there is a cry, Behold, the bridegroom! Come ye forth to meet him. 7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are going out. 9 But the wise answered, saying, Peradventure there will not be enough for us and you: go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10 And while they went away to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage feast: and the door was shut. 11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. 13 Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE FORETOLD, 24.1, 2.

II. THE SIGNS OF THE COMING, 24.3-51.

III. THE PARABLE OF THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS, 25.7-13. The Kingdom of Heaven Jesus likened to ten virgins who went forth with their lamps to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were wise (prudent) and carried oil in their oil vessels, but five were foolish (imprudent) and took no extra supply of oil.

"There are few things which are more disagreeable than a burning lamp which is short of oil. The flame is unsteady, flickering, fuming, spitting, smoking, giving far more discomfort than light. And there are few things in the moral world more disagreeable than people who keep their lamps burning with inadequate supplies of oil. They are unreliable, fitful, cheerless —altogether making far more smoke than fire. Hard duties cannot be sustained by a transient impulse, by the strength of a good resolution. He who is going to discharge Christian duties consistently will need unfailing springs of oil, he will need to feed his soul with eternal truth" (J. H. Jowett).

While the bridegroom tarried, they all slept. There is no hint of reproach in this statement: the bridegroom might tarry a long time. Midnight came and the approach of the bridegroom was announced. All the virgins arose and trimmed their lamps preparatory to going forth to meet him. The foolish ones then found their lamps were going out, and begged the wise ones to share with them their oil. But the wise virgins refused lest there might not be enough for them all, and counseled them to go out and buy oil. Dr. Bruce reminds us that sudden emergencies bring into play a certain element of selfishness, and he considers the advice of the wise to be simply a refusal to be burdened with their neighbors' affairs. In the application of the parable the thought is that the righteousness of one cannot avail for another.

While the foolish virgins went forth to buy their oil the bridegroom came: those that were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut.

Only those are ready for the coming of Christ who are always ready. What does the coming of the bridegroom mean?

"The coming of Christ is certainly not a time when he draws near in the world, for he is in the world always," Phillips Brooks explains. "It must be, then, some time or times in which his presence becomes manifest. Of such comings there are several. Men discuss which of them the text refers to—whether to the final coming for judgment, the coming to every man at death, or the coming of the Spirit at man's conversion. Let us not try to settle which it means. It cultivates the life of watchfulness within us, not to know when Christ is coming to judge the world, when he is coming to call us to himself by death, when he is coming by some great experience to our souls."

A little later the foolish virgins arrived and begged to have the door opened. "Verily I say unto you, I know you not," was the only answer they received.

Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour. Be not found unprepared. "It is not enough to have a lively zeal for a while; we must have, in addition, a perseverance that never tires" (Calvin).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The foolish, when they took their lamps, took no oil with them, verse 3. The lamps and oil vessels were of earthenware, fashioned as our illustration shows. They held only a few tablespoonfuls of oil and did not burn over two hours without replenishing, hence the necessity for the oil vessels which the foolish maidens neglected to bring. Although glass and metal lamps are now used in Palestine, such small earthenware lamps are still used by the peasants, and earthenware pitchers filled with paraffin oil or olive oil are kept beside them.

At midnight there is a cry, Behold, the bridegroom! Come ye forth to meet him, verse 6. The bride and her attendants were in her own home awaiting the coming of the bridegroom from his home, or they had already gone to the bridegroom's home, there to await his return from the house of a relative, whither he had gone to celebrate with his friends. Both customs seem to have prevailed among the Jews in these times. In either case, the bride's friends must go out and meet the procession, and sing a hymn of welcome. The lighted lamps were most essential, for they symbolized joy and welcome; extinguished lamps were symbolical of mourning and death. Hence the consternation among the foolish virgins when they saw their lamps going out and realized that they had no oil with which to replenish them.

Lamps and Oil Vessels

The way in which the coming of the bridegroom is heralded is thus described by Dr. Mackie in Bible Manners and Customs. "As the procession starts, flaming torches are held aloft by special bearers, and lighted candles are handed at the door to each visitor as he goes out. A great crowd has meanwhile assembled on the balconies, garden-walls, and flat roofs of the houses on each side of the road. It is always an impressive spectacle to watch the passage of such a brilliant retinue under the starry stillness of an oriental night. The illumination of the torches and candles not only makes the procession itself a long, winding array of moving lights, but throws into sharp relief the white dresses and thronging faces of the spectators seen against the somber walls and dark sky. The bridegroom is the center of interest. Voices are heard whispering, 'There he is!' 'There he is!' From time to time women raise their voices in the peculiar shrill, wavering shriek by which joy is expressed at marriages and other times of family and public rejoicing. The sound is heard at a great distance, and is repeated by other voices in advance of the procession, and thus intimation is given of the approach half an hour or more before the marriage escort arrives."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

On Tuesday of the last week, Jesus sat and talked with his disciples on the Mount of Olives. They asked him what would be the sign of his coming and of the end

of the world, referring to his words in regard to the temple and his words before the multitude that "Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Mt. 23.39). In answer, Jesus gave the long discourse recorded in Chapters 24 and 25. In mystical language he spoke about the future, the destruction of Jerusalem, the coming of the Son of God, the end of the age. The day and hour of his second coming were known only to the Father. They must be prepared. After giving a series of illustrations, showing how unexpected would be that coming, he gave his three parables of the judgment, those of the Bridesmaids (Ten Virgins), the Talents, and the Sheep and the Goats.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

We are called to light the lamp of service. Well, a great many respond to the call. They take up the duty. They light their lamps. But how many there are who just burn up the oil of a little impulse, and then go out! Some take up service in the Sunday school, burn brightly for a little while, and then go out! Others interest themselves actively in one or another of the many institutions established to redeem the world, burn for a little while, and then go out! We all know these people. They are well-intentioned; they are good-hearted, but when they take up a duty you know just how long they will burn—a week, or a month, or a year—and then there will be a flicker of excuses, prior to the light going out altogether. How is it? They have taken their lamps, but they have taken no oil with them. They are trying to do spiritual exercises on a starved soul. They are trying to do Christian duty without the bread of Christian truth. They do not draw upon any great eternal resources for power to sustain them in their service, and so their strength is soon spent. What do they need? Food, bread, the Bread of Life.—J. H. Jowett.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

CHRISTIAN PREPAREDNESS

Beginning the Lesson

A minister was once thoughtfully considering what he should preach about the next Sunday. He began to wonder what warning was most needed by his congregation and then he fell asleep, and in his dream was transported to a conference of evil spirits, who were discoursing how best they could lead the greatest number of men to destruction. "I know how," said one of them. "I will go into the world and declare that there is no God." "No," said the evil spirit who was presiding; "that will not avail, for nature shows too plainly that there is a God." "I can do it," said another, "for I will go to men and say, there is indeed a God, but you need not fear him; for death ends all, there is no judgment after death." "No, that will be of no use, either," declared their chief; "for it is written on men's hearts and they cannot free themselves from it that death does not end all and there will be a time of judgment." Then a third announced his plan: "I will go into the world and say that there is a God, that death does not end all, that there is a judgment, that some will go to never-ending bliss and others into never-ending torment. And I will tell them that they can only attain the joy of Heaven through Jesus Christ; he alone is the Way, they must turn to him and have their sins forgiven. All this will I tell them, and then I will add a little lie of two words. Time enough!" "Good!" said the presiding evil spirit, "you have hit it, you will succeed; go!"

I do not know what subject the minister chose when he awoke from his dream, but I think it must have been the parable of the Ten Virgins.

They Had Excellent Lamps

No doubt the foolish virgins of whom Christ told us in the parable had excellent lamps. If there were changing styles in lamps, these girls very likely had the latest, most attractive and most popular. Some of the lamps may have been old, genuine antiques, family heirlooms, greatly cherished and proudly displayed. The old ones were doubtless well polished. It was an important occasion, and the lamps were all in good order.

They lacked only oil; and there came a time when there was need of oil. It does not surprise one that five of the virgins forgot something. Bridesmaids frequently do. And what was more easily forgotten than oil? Oil was such messy stuff, and

so liable to soil a wedding garment. There surely would be other girls there with more oil than they needed. It would be easy, they may have thought, to borrow some when it was needed. Unfortunately it was not. There is something tragic in the preparation which had filled the minds of these girls for weeks beforehand, but which lacked the one thing which they were most certain to require.

All in all, we are doing quite enough for the outside of life. We spend quite enough for automobiles and amusements and for such comfort and culture as we have. But the spiritual requisites of life are not cheaply borrowed at a minute's notice at the midnight hour of need.

No man can ride in two automobiles at once, and no young woman has need of more than one fur coat at any one time. We soon reach the limit of good that can accrue to us from material things. They have their value. They are not to be despised. The wedding feast and the wedding garment and the wedding festivity are all legitimate. But none of them are marketable in exchange for oil.

These were in all probability very attractive girls. If they had been at the wedding, their costumes would have been admired, and they themselves would not have passed through the throng unnoticed. It was unfortunate that they were not among those present.

They had excellent lamps.—The Youth's Companion.

A Lesson from Dante's Allegory

You recall that in Dante's dream was a place called Ante-Purgatory, a place inhabited by the spirtually slothful, the procrastinators, who in life kept postponing all thoughts about salvation till it was too late, and they died unrepentant and unabsolved. In Ante-Purgatory they were condemned to a long, weary waiting, for a period thirty times as long as the term of their procrastination, before they could be admitted to Purgatory. The danger of unpreparedness, the peril of delay, Dante's allegory teaches. These are the lessons of our parable.

Watch, Therefore

I suppose that it would not be possible to get a better idea of what Jesus meant by the watchfulness that would become the character of one who was always looking for his undated coming, than we should have if we could understand perfectly the strange and subtle influence which the uncertainty and apparent infiniteness of the life before him has upon a child. The alertness, the receptivity, the modesty, the eagerness, and easy enlargement or readiness for great things, which belong to the best childhood, seem to me to be the very qualities which the Gospel is always trying to make in Christians, and all these qualities belong eventually to the uncertainty with which a child's future hovers before his eyes.

There are old men whom living has disenchanted with life. And if they look into it they will see that what has gone out of life is simply its uncertainty. Once, when they got up in the morning, they wondered what they would do that day; they thought of a hundred things that might happen before the sun went down. Now, they know just what they will do at every hour of the day. Life is certain to become dull and uninteresting and weary to an old man, to every man as he grows old, unless some future beyond life opens before him, which shall be to his old age all that the yet untried life was to his boyish dreams. Is there any possible thing that can replace it for you? Only that opening of another future, with new uncertainties, which has turned many an old man into a child again as he stood at the gateway of the Everlasting Life. When this life is exhausted, when its crooked streets have all been trodden to the end, still the interest need not have gone out of living if only from the hilltop of experience new and untrodden ways open themselves before us, rolling on into the mystery of eternity. Then one may die with as true vitality, as eager curiosity, as he has ever lived. To him the interest of life is still preserved, as alone it can be preserved, by the power of an uncertain future.—Phillips Brooks, in The Law of Growth.

"Is You Ready?"

There is a beautiful story told of a sermon preached upon this subject by a little lad in a sleeping car. His father and mother left him asleep in a lower berth and went back to the observation car to enjoy the grand scenery through which they were passing. An hour later a rough-looking fellow entered the car and asked, "Anybody here got a kid what's dressed in a red night-gown and sings like a bird?" The father and mother jumped to their feet in fear, but the man reassured

them. "There ain't nothing the matter with him," he said, "the matter's with us. You're a parson, ain't you? The kid, he's been singin' to us—an' talkin'. If you don't mind, we'd take it mighty good of you to come with me."

The minister followed him till they reached the smoking compartment of the thirteenth car ahead. They opened the door and stopped to listen. Upon a table stood the little boy, his face flushed, his voice shrill and sweet. "Is you ready?" he cried, insistently. "My papa says the Bridegroom is Jesus, an' he wants everybody to be ready when he comes, just 'cause he loves you." And then he sang, "Are you ready for the Bridegroom when he comes?"

"He's sung it over'n over," whispered the man, "'nd I couldn't stan' no more. He said you'd pray, parson." As the father entered the boy said to him, "They want to get ready," and then he snuggled in his father's arms while his father prayed, as he never had prayed before, for the men gathered about the child.

Soon the father carried his boy back to the sleeping car where his mother was anxiously awaiting his coming, and then returned to talk with the men. Four of them decided that night to "get ready."

For Bible Class Discussion

1. How to "prepare to meet thy God." The only way is to live with thy God so that to meet him will be nothing strange, says Phillips Brooks.

2. Do most people live as though they were to live forever?

"If my Lord should come in the morning, would he take me unawares?
If my Lord should come at noon day, would it take me by surprise?"

3. The need of reserve force.

4. Goodness is not transferable.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What other parable also tells of a capitalist who expected a return for the use of his property? 2. Which is more likely to neglect their use, the man of many talents or the man of few talents? 3. What is meant by "entering into the joy of thy Lord"? 4. Wherein lies the reward for the right use of our talents? 5. What does the parable say is the road to power? 6. What is the Christian conception of stewardship?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

BEING READY

Beginning the Lesson

Marriage customs in Eastern lands, as, of course, you know well, are very different from those of our own land. If you had lived in or visited Palestine, Egypt, or any other Eastern land, and had been out-of-doors towards midnight, you would certainly have heard on some night a great noise of shouting and music. Coming near to the commotion, you would have seen a procession of men, the leaders carrying high poles, with iron pots on top full of blazing wood which gave a great light. These men would be followed by musicians, with their flutes and drums, and others with flags, and all making a great noise—the music certainly not being harmonious.

Following just behind the men carrying the lights you would usually find a young man, with elder men on either side of him. This is the bridegroom. Going a little way with the procession, you would shortly hear another cry—possibly a shriek—which would soon be followed by a group of women coming out into the dark street, each holding aloft in the right hand a curious little lamp with a tiny light in it. In the other hand, the women would each carry a small vessel of oil, for the lamp is so small that the oil in it soon burns out. Some of the women would have tambourines or "timbrels" upon which they played. In the distance the bridegroom's procession had been heard, and the signal had been given: "Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him"; and these women, who were the bride's attendants, at once took up their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom.

On these wedding customs our Lord Jesus Christ based his parable of the Wise and the Foolish Virgins. Who will tell the parable?—Adapted from The Christian.

Why Were not the Five Ready?

Were they thinking of their beautiful dresses, so that they forgot? Or did they say, "Oh, well, we shall manage somehow: we shall get some oil somewhere"? They

were like the boys and girls who never say their prayers, nor go to church, nor think about pleasing God, saying to themselves, "It will come out all right somehow."—Dean Hodges, in When the King Comes.

Be Prepared

When the Danes were pitilessly pounding at England to bring it under their sway, when these rude invaders were murdering and burning Saxon England, the English King was so weak, inefficient and, above all, so unprepared at every point of attack, that he has gone down into history as Ethelred the Unready. After he fled over the sea to Normandy, Englishmen were subjects for two hundred years, and Danes, Normans and Angevins were their kings.

In sharp contrast with Ethelred, a certain Paul of Tarsus who changed the map of Europe and the history of the world, has been called Paul the Ready, because of his preparedness for every difficulty and obstacle. His motto is well put in his own words,—"As much as in me lieth, I am ready." He wrote, "I am ready to go to Rome," though it meant peril and persecution, and at Rome under the very shadow of martyrdom he said, "I am ready to be offered."

Sometimes the emphasis has been put on preparation for death, and in the old days men have preached many sermons on "Prepare to meet thy God." After all, the great question is not being prepared to die, but to live. Life is the big opportunity and the big responsibility. And this is what the Boy Scout motto, "Be prepared," means. That is what the movement is for, to prepare boys for the duties and responsibilities of manhood. So the scoutmaster trains his boys as they are out on patrol, to be ever alert, observing every sign; knowing what is going on around them. So it is, that he is taught by flag and arm to send wireless messages from hilltop to hilltop. He is taught what to do if he is lost in the woods; he is skilled in the art of making a fire without matches or even flint and steel.

Again, since it is a part of his duty to do a good turn to anyone in need, he is trained to rescue a drowning person, or to carry a wounded or helpless person on his back. That he may be prepared for any emergency, he is taught all kinds of First Aid to the injured. He knows how to make a stretcher out of two coats and two sticks, how to resuscitate a person saved from drowning, how to crouch low in a burning building, how to apply a bandage or stop a wound from bleeding. In short, he is ever and always "Boy Scout, Ready."—The Wellspring.

Always Ready

At the end of a long point of land extending into a beautiful lake in Switzerland, far from the beaten track of tourists, a traveler chanced upon a beautiful villa. He knocked at the garden gate and an aged gardener undid its heavy fastenings and bade him enter. The aged man seemed glad to see him and showed him around the wonderful garden. "How long have you been here?" the traveler asked. "Twenty-four years." "And how often has your master been here meanwhile?" "Four times." "When was he last here?" "Twelve years ago." "He writes often?" "Never once." "From whom do you receive your pay?" "His agent in Mailand." "But he comes here often?" "He has never been here." "Who does come, then?" "I am almost always alone,—it is very, very seldom that even a stranger comes." "Yet you have the garden in such perfect order, everything flourishing, as if you were expecting your master's coming tomorrow!" "As if he were coming today, sir, today!" exclaimed the old man.

This is the thought of our beautiful parable, the duty of being ready for our Lord's coming today, though his coming may be far in the future.

Be Ready at All Times

After the publication of Uncle Tom's Cabin, Mrs. Stowe was in London and at a public meeting was presented with a gold bracelet on which was inscribed the date of the emancipation of slavery by act of the British government. Beneath the date a place was left for the engraving of the year when slavery should be abolished in America. In accepting the gift Mrs. Stowe said: "I will transmit the gift with its instructions to my daughter, who in turn shall transmit it to her daughter. Perhaps in her lifetime that far-away date may be inscribed on this handsome bracelet." But in less than ten years from that time the Emancipation Proclamation was signed by Lincoln.

By most people death is always thought of as a far-away date. To teach that we

know not the day nor the hour when we shall meet our Lord, and that we must so live as to be ready at all times, Jesus gave his parable of the Ten Virgins.

Preparedness

By Preparedness is meant readiness to meet a coming test or strain. It is equipment to cope successfully with an approaching ordeal or crisis. It is fitness to stand unabashed in the presence of a foe or friend. Everybody believes in the importance of it, for every today opens out into a tomorrow, and every human being is brought constantly into situations which demand a preparedness of mind and heart if failure is to be avoided.

Preparedness is one of the great Christian virtues. Jesus was always insisting upon it. He constantly emphasized the importance of it. He knew that life is critical, and that men must walk with cautious feet, and with eyes which look far ahead. One of his most thrilling words was "Watch!" He spoke it again and again.

Be ready to meet the members of the Christian church helpfully. Boys and girls are children today, but tomorrow they are grown men and women, and the church must depend upon them for energy and wisdom with which to do its work. Every Christian is expected to make his contribution to the church. Each one must put into it what he has. But suppose he has nothing, how can he put anything in? He certainly can make no contribution unless he is prepared, and the preparation must be carried on through a great many years. One cannot become an effective servant of Christ in a day or a week or a year. Faith and hope and love are built up little by little, and courage and patience and self-control come gradually through the seasons. Many grown men and women when they come into the church, add nothing to its strength or influence, because they come unprepared. There is nothing they can do, because they are not equipped. There is little they can contribute, because their resources are so meager. Begin today, then, to get ready for the work you must do by and by.

Be ready to meet your friend, Death. Some of you may be surprised to have Death called a friend. The poets have often called him an enemy, but the poets are mistaken. The painters have generally painted him black, but the painters have used the wrong color. Death is called a King of terrors because we do not understand him. Rightly understood he is our benefactor. He does not do the awful things of which he is accused. He does not cut life short: he lets life out to its completion. He does not quench light: he lets new light in. He does not destroy love: he raises love to a higher power. He does not abolish joy: he gives us increased capacity for rapture. He is our friend. He is God's messenger sent to open the door, and to tell us that the time has arrived for us to go up higher. Be ready, therefore, to meet him as a friend! I have often noticed in the cemetery that there are many little graves. Boys and girls die, even babies die. No one of us can say how long he has to live. You cannot be certain whether you will ever grow to manhood or womanhood in this world, and, therefore, the only sensible way to live is always to be prepared. How can we be prepared? Only by doing our duty all the time.—Condensed from Under Twenty, by Charles E. Jefferson.

Sentence Sermons

The best preparation for the future is the present well seen to.—George Macdonald.

Insurance cannot be obtained when flames are bursting out of a house: he who does not strive for victories in youth stands small show of victories in manhood.—J. G. K. McClure.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What is the meaning and history of the word *talent?* 2. Why did the servant who gained two talents receive the same reward as the one who gained five talents? 3. Which of the twelve disciples were the five-talented men? 4. What is the meaning of the one-talented man's words in verse 24? 5. Use or lose: of what talents is this true? 6. Why should talents be used for others and not wholly for self? 7. What are you doing with the talents that you have?

CONTRAST BETWEEN FAITHFULNESS AND SLOTHFULNESS

GOLDEN TEXT: Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Matthew 25.21

LESSON Matthew 25.14-46 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 40.1-8

MATTHEW 25.14 For *it is* as *when* a man, going into another country, called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. 15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each according to his several ability; and he went on his journey. 16 Straightway he that received the five talents went and traded with them, and made other five talents. 17 In like manner he also that *received* the two gained other two. 18 But he that received the one went away and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. 19 Now after a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and maketh a reckoning with them. 20 And he that received the five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: lo, I have gained other five talents. 21 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of the lord. 22 And he also that *received* the two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: lo, I have gained other two talents. 23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 24 And he also that had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering where thou didst not scatter; 25 and I was afraid, and went away and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, thou hast thine own. 26 But his lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I did not scatter; 27 thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back mine own with interest. 28 Take ye away therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him that hath the ten talents. 29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away. 30 And cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE COMMISSION RECEIVED, verses 14, 15. The situation as regards the Kingdom of Heaven, said Jesus in his parable of the Talents, is comparable to that of a man who, about to go to another country, calls together his servants and delivers to them his goods. In the interpretation of the parable, the "man" represents Christ; his "goods," all possessions—life, physical and mental powers, etc.,—which are represented as God's property, entrusted to men, his servants, as a loan.

> "Sacrifice and offering
> None there is that I can bring—
> None save what is thine alone:
> I bring thee, Lord, but of thine own" (Christina Rossetti).

The servants were all trustworthy, but they differed in ability, and the master apportioned his goods among them according to his judgment of each. Unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one. Even the one talent represented a considerable sum, about one thousand dollars, whose value is realized when we recall that a denarius was a day's wage, and a talent was the equivalent of six thousand denarii. In the interpretation of the parable, the "talents" are the "goods," whatever is given to each one for use and improvement. Our use of the word "talent" to signify mental gift or skill in accomplishing anything is derived from its use in this parable.

II. THE COMMISSION CARRIED OUT, verses 16-18. The one who received five talents lost no time, but straightway went and traded with them, and made other five talents. In like manner he that received two talents doubled them. But he that received the one talent went away and hid it in the earth. It was a common practice in the East to bury money for safekeeping, but his lord wanted increase as well as safety.

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Eugène Burnand

THE THREE-TALENT, TWO-TALENT AND ONE-TALENT MEN

The lord of those servants cometh, and maketh a reckoning with them.

III. THE FAITHFUL ONES REWARDED, verses 19-23. After a long time the lord returned and made a reckoning with his servants. The one who doubled his five talents he commended in these words: "Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things."

Work well done brings greater work to do. Doing the right brings power to do more right. The reward is in the doing, in the enlarged capacity, and in the approving conscience which bespeaks the divine approval.

"Enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

"The understanding of our stewardship as a genuine fellowship with God —a partnership in God's life of love—makes the whole transaction an experience of joy and satisfaction. To speak of hardship, self-denial, sacrifice, is merely to use convenient terms with which to contrast the freedom, the spontaneity, the abandon, the richness of the partnership of true stewardship, with the reluctance, the half-heartedness, the self-regarding attitude of those who call the things they have their own" (Guy M. Morrill).

Then in the same words the Master commended the one who had doubled his two talents.

Not as much is expected of the two-talent man as of the five-talent man, but the same faithfulness is required of each. For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according as a man hath, not according as he hath not, said Paul. We are not responsible for the three or four talents which we have not, but we are responsible for the one or two talents which we have.

IV. THE SLOTHFUL ONE PUNISHED, verses 24-30. "Lord, I knew that thou art a hard man" (austere man, Luke 19.21), said he who had received one talent, "reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering where thou didst not scatter." He uses proverbial expressions for an unscrupulous, grasping man. It is "all work and no pay" in his lord's service, his lord "takes all the increase and gives the laborer no share in the reward," he thus says. "And I was afraid," he continued, "and went away and hid thy talent in the earth; lo, thou hast thine own."

The other two men "came and brought"; this man only "came and said." Often this is the trouble with the one-talent man—he finds some fault, utters some criticism, but does nothing.

"Thou wicked and slothful servant!" exclaimed his lord. "You called me hard, I call you a churl" (A. B. Bruce). "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, Luke 19.22. If thou knewest this, thou oughtest to have put my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received mine own with interest." Turning to men who would carry out his will, he said, "Take ye away therefore the talent from him who made no use of it, and give it unto him who hath ten talents, who will make the most use of it." Then he gave voice to a general principle which, hard and inexorable, is always true: "Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away." No better interpretation of the seeming paradox in the last part of this statement could be found than the words of Aristotle: "He who hath this or that, and makes no use of it, may not improperly be said both to have it and not to have it."

"In every realm nature withdraws her gift from him who neglects or misuses it. Neglecting vision, the mole is punished with blindness; neglecting wings, the flying-fish finds these members hanging feebly by its side; neglecting to use the sap it receives, the branch withers, rots and falls away from the tree; while that monk who made a vow not to lift his hand from his side for a period of years found at last his arm a withered, helpless thing—dead, yet hanging to a living body. For use is life, neglect is atrophy and death. There is no talent that comes unasked; there is no grace of mind and heart that stays unurged. Happy, indeed, is he who hath ears to hear the still small voice that whispers 'He who neglects his finer spiritual sentiment shall find that the inner light hath failed'" (Newell Dwight Hillis).

V. THE JUDGMENT, verses 31-46.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods, verse 14. The story is true to the oriental life of the period; for, when a wealthy man was leaving home for a while, two courses were open to him for the arrangement of his affairs: either he might make his confidential slaves his agents, committing to them the tilling of his land, and giving to them the money to be used by them in trade; or he might take advantage of the money-changing system which had been introduced by the Phœnicians, and which was at the time in full operation throughout the Roman Empire.—William M. Taylor.

He went and traded with them, verse 16. The Jews have always been a trading people. They had in the first century the same genius for commerce as now. This is obvious from the prominent place which Jesus gives in his parables to the bank, the talents, the stewards, the questions of interest, capital, and revenue. He made use of such comparisons because he knew how familiar they were to his hearers, and the Fathers have handed down to us a saying of his which is not in the Gospels, but which belongs to the same order of thought: "Be good bankers," he is reported to have said.—Edmond Stapfer.

Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the bankers, verse 27. The Greek word, translated *exchangers* or *bankers,* is derived from the *bank* or *bench* on which money was placed. There were numerous money-changers, or bankers, in Palestine, who received deposits at interest. The tel-el-Amarna tablets have records of banking transactions which took place 1400 B.C. The rate of interest varied from four to forty per cent. The Old English word *usury* from the Latin *usura* signified at first merely the sum paid for the use of money, but it gradually became a "fallen word," signifying exorbitant interest.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Time and place are the same as in our last lesson.

"Watch, therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour," are the last words of the parable of the Ten Virgins, and also in thought the first words of the parable of the Talents which immediately follows: "For it is as when a man going into another country, called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods." Jesus has in mind his own "going into another country"; he would have his disciples realize their responsibility for the carrying on of his work. The exhortation to watch in the parable of the Ten Virgins with its lesson that the spiritual life must be kept alive by valiant effort, is supplemented in this parable of the Talents by the exhortation to fidelity in active service during the time of waiting.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Milton's expression, "That one talent which is death to hide," reveals a world of wisdom. There may be several members of your class who need the encouragement implied in the giving of the same words of commendation to the two-talented man as to the five-talented man. There may be several members who need the lesson of the one-talented man. And perhaps all the members need to think about giving expression to the truth that not money alone but all one's talents are not for one's use alone.

"The acid test of all teaching depends upon the questions: Are my pupils *thinking* for themselves? What are they *doing about it?*"

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

STEWARDSHIP OF SERVICE

Beginning the Lesson

In an address upon Life Complete through Stewardship, Dr. S. S. Hough illuminated the point that we must uproot the false notion that we own what we possess by the following incident:

"Our neighbor boy, Kenneth, when but two years old, came into our garden when I was picking beans. He wanted to help. He was shown the difference between a leaf and a bean, and I pulled a bean and put it in the basket. Then Kenneth pulled one and threw it into the basket with much delight. We went

forward with increasing interest and soon came to the end of the row, when Kenneth picked up the little basket full of beans and struck out with them to his home. They were all his. He took no account of the many years of labor and economy that made it possible for me to purchase the little house and garden. He knew nothing of the conditions and work involved in bringing the garden to productiveness. Kenneth simply came on the scene at the last minute, helped to pick a few of the beans, and they were his."

Then Dr. Hough showed that we must supplant that false notion with the Christian idea of God's sovereign ownership and ourselves as stewards of all:

"We are all children of a larger growth. Many of us have forgotten the sacrifices of the past generations that made our country what it has become in resources and possibilities. 'Other men labored and ye are entered into their labors.'

"Multitudes seem to forget that God puts 95 per cent into everything we grow or get. The farmer may say, 'See the splendid corn I've raised!' But, in reality, he put into it only a fraction of the necessary elements. God gave the seed, the soil, the rain, dew and sunshine; and the breezes to distribute the pollen. 'God giveth the increase.'

"In every form of production and exchange the same principles apply. We are likely to think of the present financial returns of our business or profession without regard for the long train of events that made them possible.

"To be fair; to be honest with God and our fellows, and to meet the conditions for our own spiritual development, we must devote to Christ and his Cause our talents and time in worship and in service, and at least a tithe of the income—all as an acknowledgment of God's sovereign ownership and blessings."

It is from the parable by which Jesus taught these lessons that our use of the word *talent* comes. What was a talent in his time? What is it in ours? (Continue with Text Explained.)

The New Testament Understanding of Christian Stewardship

A steward is "a person intrusted with the management of estates, or affairs not his own." What lends distinction to the office of a steward is the trust which is given him, and not the value of the thing intrusted; for to trust a man with anything is to show him honor, challenging his best, and to lay upon him a great responsibility.

In a legal trust a man may have the entire disposal of a great fortune, or a great enterprise, and yet at the same time be accountable to the courts for his disposition of every penny. Now this is what stewardship really means. It means that our powers and our possessions are held in trust. They are ours and they are not ours. We are responsible for the use of every one of them. Christian stewardship means to think of power and possession as a Christian trust to be used in the spirit of Jesus Christ for the service of his kingdom.

Paul uses a beautiful word when he speaks of money and giving. His word is "communion," quite literally. It is the word we use now for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; he used it for the sacrament of giving. It meant, to begin with, a joint-stock partnership; and that is what Christian stewardship really is. It is joint-stock partnership with Jesus Christ in the use of life, faculty, possession. It is communion; it is a sacrament; and if only we could once associate money with the idea of its real sacredness, we might find the key to something which puzzles and escapes us.

Money is sacred, because money is the coinage of life and labor. It is never easily made. The only way to make money is to create well-being, which is another name for wealth—and a better one. And the only way to create wealth is to work hard and, generally, sacrificially. There are a great many ways of *getting* money; we may take it as a gift, inherit it, find it, steal it, or make a fortunate deal in Florida, or on the stock market. But *making* it requires life, and toil, and time. When you hold a dollar in your hand you are holding a little bit of a man's life, or a little bit of God's gift. Of course money is sacred. If we should learn to use it as life itself is to be used; if we should cease to distinguish between spending, saving, and giving; and see in everything we do with money just the sacred use of a tremendous power, created at vital cost, whether we use it for ourselves or for others—then we should come nearer than most of us do today to the right management of the whole difficult matter. This is Christian stewardship in the entire New Testament understanding of it.—Gaius Glenn Atkins, in The Sunday School World.

The Deadly Sin of Mismanagement

The deadly sin of our age is "mismanagement"—leaving undone the thing we ought to have done—failing to enter opened doors of opportunity—letting rust gather on the talents entrusted to us to use for the King. No age has ever been possessed of resources so nearly adequate to the accomplishment of the Kingdom task as ours. But so recklessly are these great resources being wasted in grievous mismanagement that our age's primary guilt is for unrealized possibilities. This sin grows out of many different motives:

Fear (as in the case of the man with one talent)—lack of courage to undertake great things lest we shall not be able to put them over—the anxiety to save one's self.

Ignorance—not knowing how best to invest so as to realize the greatest returns—money illiteracy.

Pride—unwillingness to use the resources we have because we are unable to do as much as some others possessed of more talents.

Love of pleasure or love of ease—seeking one's own satisfaction rather than the profit of the owner.—Guy L. Morrill.

How to Be Honest with our Partner

The lord of the parable left to the full initiative of his stewards the handling of his estate. Theirs was perfect freedom to plan and to execute. In our stewardship, God sets no fixed procedure. Each is expected to follow his own mind. There are no coercing rules. The true steward will wish to seek and know the mind of his Lord, but it will be wholly his to say how to express that mind in the concrete.

The lord of those servants came and made a reckoning with them. Stewardship involves accounting. Too often the idea of accounting is used to accentuate judgment, but the true purpose of this accounting is not in order to get the facts on which to pass judgment but to find what errors are in the present plan of work and set about the realization of larger and better results. Accounting speaks of specificness, definiteness, exactness.

The vague haziness of much of our treatment of spiritual realities must go, before we shall be able to do real business with the unseen. Spiritual actualities must be treated with as much precision in reckoning as bricks and boards and acres of land. We must diagram our spiritual intents. We must blueprint our desires and longings, our ambitions and motives. The soul must keep books if it is to be honest with itself and with its God. There must be "budget making" and "time scheduling."—Guy L. Morrill.

It is not Mine to Hoard

And if I share my crust,
As common manhood must,
With one whose need is greater than my own,
Shall I not also give
His soul, that it may live,
Of the abundant pleasures I have known?
And so, if I have wrought,
Amassed, or conceived aught
Of beauty, or intelligence or power,
It is not mine to hoard:
It stands there to afford
Its generous service as a flower.—Bliss Carman.

Stewardship of the Whole of Life

Christian stewardship is the administration of life itself. Serious minds are greatly disturbed because of the increasing misuse of the Sabbath; but the most serious defect of Christian men and women in their use of time is not that they do not conduct Sunday as a sacred day, but that they conduct every other day of the week as though it were unrelated to their religious obligation.

Christian stewardship involves, because life includes it, a Christian's labor. It will not necessarily take any man out of any occupation in which, under any circumstances, he has a right to be; but it may make him conduct it in a fashion very different from that to which he has been accustomed. It will involve his measurement of service rendered, of wages paid and wages received, of the quality of craftsmanship given to the particular enterprise. It will compel him to appraise them all in the light of the ideals of Jesus. The entire range of personal and social interests

related to one's occupation will be judged by the Spirit of Christ. Christian stewardship, in a word, is Christian discipleship preserved at the level on which Christ lived. Being the expression of the whole of life, it involves one's leisure. Our generation, in its amusements, does not want culture; it wants a "kick," and the "kick" is soonest found in lurid pictures, sensual dances, excesses of sport, and adventures in immorality. Christian stewardship holds a disciple's leisure in trust for his Lord. It will not decrease his pleasures, but will discipline his taste to pleasures that perfect experience and enrich life. He may lose a thrill, but he will find a satisfaction.

What dare not be ignored is the Christian stewardship of religion. All we have of faith, assurance, hope, redemption, was wrought for us by One who counted not his life dear unto himself. It is not astonishnig to find, then, that the logic of Christian stewardship leads directly to intercessory prayer. Whatever prayer may be for him who prays, it is a wizened effort unless it is directed in the interests of the world. It is not a petition only, but participation as well. A Christian owes, and a Christian steward pays, his energies of prayer on behalf of the world around him.

And, of course, Christian stewardship involves a Christian's use of money. Most people, when they talk of stewardship, think only of money, and identify it with some form of tithing. But tithing is only a particular method of maintaining one aspect of the stewardship to which Christians are obligated. No man can be a Christian steward who does not express his stewardship with his money; but men and women may easily exhibit a stewardship of money and be very unfaithful stewards nevertheless. Protestants regard with abhorrence the Roman Catholic doctrine of indulgences, by the practice of which communicants purchase absolution for wrongdoing. We remember that the Reformation took form against that doctrine and practice. But the Protestant habit of regarding a generous disposition of one's money in religious enterprises as palliating unchristian conduct of life is just as absurd and possibly more fatal.—Condensed from an Article in The Christian Advocate by Joseph M. M. Gray.

The Sacrament of Life

Life is God's sacramental gift
To man for his emprising,—
The talent given into his care
For his soul's exercising,—
A sacred trust bestowed on him
For his immortalizing.

And he who lends will one day ask
His own again with interest,
See to it, then, lest thou be found
Of those who failed him in the test.—John Oxenham.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Do you agree with James H. Speer that the major emphasis of the church should be upon Christian stewardship with all its implications—leadership, talent, time, thought, prayer and possessions?

2. The man with one talent: See Chapter VIII of The Purpose and Use of Comfort, by Phillips Brooks.

3. To him that hath shall be given—the law of cumulative effect.

4. The capacity for religion extirpated by disuse. See Sermon with this title by Horace Bushnell.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What plans had been made for the arrest of Jesus? 2. What excuses can you give for the three disciples? 3. In how far is need for others a sign of strength or of weakness? 4. Why did Jesus shrink from the cross? 5. What help is there for us in the Gethsemane suffering? 6. How was Jesus' prayer answered? 7. How would you answer Drummond's question: "Are we working out our common, everyday life on the great lines of God's will"?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

HOW TO USE OUR TALENTS

Beginning the Lesson

In Ben Hur, Lew Wallace has given this graphic account (shortened) of the

time of reckoning between Ben Hur, who had been in a far country, and Simonides, his father's servant:

"In anticipation of the demand," Simonides began, "I have here a statement covering the property. Will it please not thee to read it carefully now?"

"Later, O Simonides, I will read the papers carefully; for the present, do thou give me their substance."

"This," said Simonides, drawing out the first leaf, "shows the money I had of thy father's, being the amount saved from the Romans; there was no property saved, only money, and that the robbers would have secured but for our Jewish custom of bills of exchange. The amount saved, being sums I drew from Rome, Alexandria, Damascus, Carthage, Valentia, and elsewhere within the circle of trade, was one hundred and twenty talents Jewish money."

He gave the sheet to his daughter, and took the next one.

"With that amount—one hundred and twenty talents—I charged myself. Hear now my credits. I use the word, as thou wilt see, with reference rather to the proceeds gained from the use of the money."

From separate sheets he then read footings and total, and then said: "To these now, to the five hundred and fifty talents gained, add the original capital I had from thy father, and thou hast six hundred and seventy-three talents!—and all thine—making thee, O son of Hur, the richest subject in the world."

He took the papyri and offered them to Ben Hur. The pride perceptible in his manner was not offensive; it might have been from a sense of duty well done; it might have been for Ben Hur without reference to himself.

Taking the roll, Ben Hur arose, struggling with emotion. "I give first thanks to the Lord, who has not abandoned me," he said with a husky voice; "and my next to thee, O Simonides. Thy faithfulness outweighs the cruelty of others, and redeems our human nature."

Simonides is the five talent man of our parable. What is the parable?

What the Master was Thinking about

I think our Lord's parable of the talents gains great significance from the circumstances of its birth. When was it spoken? On Tuesday night in Holy Week. The darkness was falling. The three years' public ministry was nearly ended What was there to show for all the labor of those years? In three more days the Lord would be crucified. That is to say, the somber shadow of Calvary is even now resting on our Lord. The crowds have melted away before the chilling menace of persecution. There is only a handful left, and in the shadow of the Cross the Master is speaking to them about their talents.

And were these men very talented? Not if they were measured by the standards of the world. They were not highly gifted in the estimation of the pedant or in the reckonings of the schools. There are a few fishermen among them, and perhaps a farmer or two. There is a collector of taxes, and there are two or three more who have been chosen from very humble callings, which they followed on the borders of the Galilean lake. What kind of talents was the Master thinking about when he spoke to men like these? He must have been thinking of gifts which will not shut ordinary folks out of the circle of the fellowship. He was not thinking of poetic talent, which is the distinction of only a very few. He was not thinking of philosophic talent, which is almost as rare. When I hear the Master speaking about talents, with the cross looming very near on the horizon, I keep my eyes on the fishermen who are listening to him, and I feel he must be speaking of a kind of talent which is human enough and inclusive enough to take us all in.—J. H. Jowett.

How Korean Christians Use their Talents

Over in Korea there is a group of very earnest Christians. A larger building was needed in which to worship: how could the money be raised, for all were poor? They met for the purpose, and this was the result: one man gave a fifth of his total wealth, another gave an ox, a third gave the ground on which to build, many gave bags of rice, braids of hair, articles of clothing, etc., which could be sold and turned into money. Yet others pledged certain days of time for work, and thus the new building was made possible.

These Christians know our parable, and believe that the gifts they have, whether money or time or talent of any sort, have been bestowed upon them, not for themselves alone, but also for the sake of the Giver and of their fellow men. We believe this also, do we not? But do we give enough thought to the ways in which our

talents can be used for others? Have we spent any of our time this past week, for instance, in adding to the comfort or pleasure of others? What did Jesus say about deeds done unto others in the last part of this chapter which we are studying?

How One Man Used his One Talent

When the terrible accident was over, and they uncovered his mangled body, so little of life was left in it that they thought him dead. And when the surgeons had finished their work there remained but the physical wreck of a man.

Both legs were gone; the left arm was missing, and had taken with it the greater part of the collar-bone. Of the right hand only a finger and the thumb remained. There was only enough left of the man that had been to suffer and remember.

But he still possessed a brilliant mind, stored with rich fruitage of a college training and enriched by travel in every part of the world. And it was all wasted, wasted, wasted! There was nothing he could do but to remain a helpless sufferer.

So he thought as he sat by the window in the Home for Incurables, and looked out on a world of which he had ceased to be a part. Before him lay his Bible, and he read the parable of the talents, and reflected bitterly that he had now not one talent to bury; he himself was as good as buried, and his talents, which had been many, were buried already.

An old lady wheeled her chair beside his, and read a letter which had been sent her. It was from a stranger, but it did her good.

He was interested, and asked her about it, and learned that there was a kind of organization that furnished addresses of invalids and shut-in folk to persons who were willing to write them cheerful letters. She had sent her name as one who would be glad of an occasional letter, and this unknown correspondent wrote her regularly, and the letters comforted her.

A sudden thought came to him. To receive letters would be little comfort to him, but why should he not write them? But to whom? Could there be any persons so shut in as he who could be cheered by his letters? Possibly the men in prison were a trifle more to be pitied; yet even they had hope of release, and he had none. But it was worth trying.

So he wrote to the secretary of the organization for the names of some prisoners. He was informed that his letters could not be answered; the rules of the prison would not permit. But he undertook the one-sided correspondence.

Twice a week he wrote, and the letters taxed his strength to its limit. But into those letters he put his whole soul, all his experience, all his faith, all his bright wit, all his Christian optimism.

It is hard to continue writing when writing costs labor and pain, and especially hard when there is no reply. There were times when he grew discouraged, and was tempted to give it up. But it was his one remaining talent, and he resolved to use it as long as it lasted.

At length he got a letter. It was very short, and written on the stationery of the prison by the officer whose duty it was to read the letters of the convicts. All it said was this:

"Please write on as good paper as you can afford, for your letters are passed from cell to cell till they literally drop to pieces."—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons

No one knows the magnitude of the gift that is in him until he uses it.—Gipsy Smith.

An engine of one-cat power running all the time is more effective than one of forty-horse power standing still.—G. W. Curtis.

"Talents are seeds by Heaven's good gift bestowed,
To render back their increase unto God;
Talents are deeds to do, or duties done,
Whate'er their number be—five, two or one."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What do you think of Peter as you see him in our text? 2. How did he carry out his promise? 3. Where was Gethsemane? 4. At what other times were Peter, James and John the favored disciples? 5. Why did Jesus want them near him in Gethsemane? 6. What did Jesus mean by "this cup"? 7. When had Jesus asked his disciples if they were able to drink his cup, and what had they answered? 8. What did all the disciples do after the arrest?

JESUS IN THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS

GOLDEN TEXT: He went forward a little, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. Matthew 26.39

LESSON Matthew 26.1-75 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 42.1-5

MATTHEW 26.31 Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended in me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. 32 But after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee. 33 But Peter answered and said unto him, If all shall be offended in thee, I will never be offended. 34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. 35 Peter saith unto him, Even if I must die with thee, *yet* will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

36 Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here, while I go yonder and pray. 37 And he took with him Peter and two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and sore troubled. 38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: abide ye here, and watch with me. 39 And he went forward a little, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. 40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? 41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. 42 Again a second time he went away, and prayed, saying, My Father, if this cannot pass away, except I drink it, thy will be done. 43 And he came again and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. 44 And he left them again, and went away, and prayed a third time, saying again the same words. 45 Then cometh he to the disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46 Arise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that betrayeth me.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. ANOINTED FOR HIS BURIAL, verses 1-13.

II. THE TREACHERY OF JUDAS, verses 14-16.

III. PREPARATION FOR KEEPING THE PASSOVER FEAST, verses 17-19.

IV. THE BETRAYAL FORETOLD, verses 20-25.

V. THE LAST SUPPER AND THE DEPARTURE TO THE MOUNT OF OLIVES, verses 26-30.

VI. PETER'S DENIAL FORETOLD, verses 31-35. On the way Jesus suddenly said, "All ye shall be offended in me (caused to stumble by what is to befall me) this night: for it is written (Zech. 13.7), I will smite the shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." See the fulfillment in Matthew.

Then he added the encouraging words: "After I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee." "The Shepherd will yet again go before his flock, leading them."

"If all shall be offended in thee," vehemently Peter exclaimed, "I will never be offended." He is not sure of the other disciples, but he is certain in regard to himself! How little he knew his own weakness!

> "Forsake the Christ thou sawest transfigured, him
> Who trod the sea and brought the dead to life?
> 'What should wring this from thee!'—ye laugh and ask.
> What wrung it? Even a torchlight and a noise,
> The sudden Roman faces, violent hands,
> And fear of what the Jews might do! Just that,
> And it is written, 'I forsook and fled';
> There was my trial, and it ended thus" (Browning).

"Never," said Peter, but it will happen "this night," said his Master. "Verily I say unto thee, that this night before the cock crow—before the dawn—thou shalt deny me thrice." Again Peter protested his loyalty and fidelity: "Even if I must die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." Likewise also said all the disciples.

VII. IN GETHSEMANE, verses 36-46. Jesus led his eleven disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane, retracing for the last time his oft-repeated journeys thither

for seasons of prayer and meditation. "Sit ye here," he said to the disciples, "while I go yonder and pray."

"Jesus did not require the sights and sounds of the garden to recall God to his mind; but is it not significant that even he turned in the hour of his spiritual conflict to the place at which for some time he had been accustomed to be especially conscious of God's presence? Human experience generally finds it helpful to employ this practice of devotion" (James Moffatt).

With his three chosen disciples, Peter and James and John, Jesus went farther on into the garden. They were the only ones he had allowed with him at the raising of the daughter of Jairus; they alone had been with him on the Mount of Transfiguration; and now they were with him in the time of his great agony in Gethsemane. It is only one's closest friends whom one wishes with one in the solemn moments of life. And he began to be sorrowful and sore troubled, and even said to the disciples, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Before this he had talked calmly with his disciples of the cup he was about to drink, but now, in truth, he was "clean forespent, forespent."

"Jesus' humanity was never more plainly shown in all the three and thirty years he lived on earth, than during those few hours in Gethsemane. He was 'sore troubled' and 'exceeding sorrowful'; and in our sad hours, when our burdens seem too heavy to be borne, and our griefs beyond endurance, we can turn to this episode in our Master's life and say to ourselves, 'He knoweth our pain, for he suffered a man's perplexities and griefs" (Francis E. Clark).

"Abide ye here, and watch with me," Jesus bade his disciples. "His trouble was beyond their depth: what could they do? What can a little child do that looks up into the face of the mother and sees her tears dropping one by one, and knows not what ails her, and can only once in a while climb up into her lap and say, 'Don't cry, mother'? The heart of Jesus in his great trial would have been comforted if those whom he loved and who loved him were present with him, and were in sympathy with him" (H. W. Beecher).

"Is it stretching the thought underlying to believe that he still craves our companionship as well as desires our love? We rightly dwell upon our infinite need of him, on the blessedness of his friendship, on the joy of his presence; but friendship demands two people at least, joy cannot be shared without a companionship and unshared joy is not joy, even for the Savior of mankind" (Francis E. Clark).

"When the soul enters its Gethsemane, it withdraws a stone's cast from its most trusted friends." Jesus went forward a little, and falling on the ground prayed that if it were possible (if in accord with his Father's will), "this cup" this suffering, might pass away from him. "Nevertheless," he added, "not as I will, but as thou wilt."

"The petition of Jesus at this supreme moment was not granted. The cup did not pass from him. He drank it to the dregs. And yet we complain when, in our careless morning prayer, we ask for fair weather or health or personal success, because we do not get just what we ask for, and when we ask for it!"

On returning to the three disciples, Jesus found them sleeping instead of watching. "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" he exclaimed. "So! Is this what it has come to? You were not able to watch with me one hour!" (Euthymius). "He seems to be as much surprised as if he expected to find them awake. However well Jesus may know that his disciples will fail him and sleep while he is struggling, there is a perfect conviction of their weakness which can come to him only when he actually sees them lying helpless on the ground; and when the perfect conviction comes it is a shock and a surprise" (Phillips Brooks).

Jesus went away and prayed a second time, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away, except I drink it, thy will be done." "In that prayer he may have seen first the vision of what it would mean for the world if he evaded the suffering and escaped to a painless peace—and then the other vision, the vision by which his cross

was to be the solution and inspiration of every righteous tragedy down the years of history, to cast a light across every hard path, to point every trembling and fearful spirit to the exact right and to give the power of an everlasting victory. Then he said, 'Thy will be done,' not with negative resignation, but with the joyful acceptation of the best that could be for the world and for him" (Charles Lewis Slattery).

"O Lord, grant that I may never seek to bind
The straight to the crooked, that is, thy will to mine;
But that I may ever bind the crooked to the straight,
That is, my will to thine" (Augustine).

Again he returned to the disciples and again found them sleeping. "It is as if one who was passing through some deep experience might go to the chamber where a child was sleeping and find relief when the burden of the solitary crisis was too great to bear" (Phillips Brooks). A third time he left them and offered the same words, but then when he returned he calmly said, "Sleep on, now, and take your rest." "He was content to suffer, content to die. He had found his peace under the hammerstroke of anguish. For a time he hears only the beating of his own heart, so much calmer than at first, now that the horror is nearer. But after some moments he hears approaching the sound of cautious scuffling, and there among the bushes which border the road red flickerings of light appear and disappear in the darkness. The lights are carried by the servants of the assassins who are following Judas Iscariot along the path." Jesus turned to his disciples, still half asleep, and said, "Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."

"The great betrayal is now, not at the gate of the Garden of Gethsemane in the first century. The constant and increasingly terrible denial of the Lord is the present failure to love him and to live in his way. This treachery is manifest every time we prove recreant to the imperial command and the lofty example of the Lord of life. In that searching poem by John Masefield, The Everlasting Mercy, the little Quaker woman drove the shaft home to the heart of Saul Kane as she said to him when he was putting the glass to his lips, 'Saul Kane, every time you do that you press another thorn into the brow of Christ.' We know better than to hate; we know better than to be impure in word or deed; we know better than to give anything less than our best to our comrades in the common walks of life. It is so easy to censure Judas; it is so easy to apologize for ourselves!" (Ozora S. Davis).

"Arise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that betrayeth me," Jesus added.

"Out of the woods my Master went,
And he was well content;
Out of the woods my Master came
Content with death and shame."

VIII. THE ARREST, verses 47-56.
IX. THE TRIAL BEFORE CAIAPHAS, verses 57-68.
X. PETER'S THREE DENIALS, verses 69-75.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Not as I will, but as thou wilt, verse 39. Very different from this acquiescence in the Father's will is the resignation of the modern Turks to Kismet, or Fate. "Oldou, It has become!" they say after any event, and it is accepted as satisfactory "unless another event should be fated to undo it." In an account of the revolution which dethroned Sultan Abdul-Hamid II it was said that "The old Sultan pockets his pride with the reflection. 'It was fate,' and the new monarch ascends the throne with a like acquiescence."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Read the first thirty verses of our chapter.

The narrow Kidron Valley winds around the eastern side of Jerusalem and beyond it is the Mount of Olives on whose slope lay Gethsemane. John (18.1) calls it a garden: an oriental garden consists of fruit trees, shade trees, or shrubs rather than

of flowers or vegetables. The word Gethsemane means oil-press. The Garden was an orchard of olive trees.

There are two traditional gardens, side by side at the base of the Mount of Olives; one belongs to the Latins, the other to the Greeks. A section of the one cared for by the Franciscan monks is illustrated here, with its cypress trees and olive trees and shrubbery that separates the flower beds. The Franciscan monk is one of its caretakers. The olive trees have been here since the first tax was collected on fruit trees (636); their gnarled trunks resemble granite rather than wood.

The Garden of Gethsemane

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
GETHSEMANE

Beginning the Lesson

Why did Jesus go to Gethsemane that night? He knew that Judas was going to betray him, that Judas would go there with his gang to find him: why did he go? He might have done a number of things to avoid them. "He might have kept away from the garden—it would have been just as easy to go somewhere else. He might have escaped before they reached him—his listening ear had caught the sound of their approaching feet, and under cover of the friendly trees he might have escaped. He might have disappeared from their midst—he had done that before. What he did do was to go out and meet the enemy more than half-way, and to introduce himself. The kiss of Judas was unnecessary; he introduced himself. He went with them because he was *willing* to go—they could not take him." What had been his experience in Gethsemane that brought to him peace and content with his fate?

Explanations of the Agony in Gethsemane

The usual explanation is that it was the sins of the world which Jesus bore.

"Toward the garden called Gethsemane
We turn our faces and our steps today
And wait in hushed and pitying grief apart,
While Christ takes the world's sins into his heart."

A noted preacher believes that Jesus was pondering the question as to what his Father wished him to do. Could his mission survive that catastrophe of his death?

Could those timid, half-educated fishermen carry on his work? His anguish was not dread of the tragedy of the morrow. Many a soldier in the late war has faced unhesitatingly greater physical pain and one longer continued. His was the greater dread of a greater tragedy—dread lest he fail to understand his Father's will, or fail in courage to achieve that will. His prayer was that this tragedy he might escape.

Still another interpretation is given by Phillips Brooks. He writes:

"He was the Son of man, the Lord of life. We feel instinctively that life must have been in him the most complete thing possible. And if life were preëminent in him, then the love of life, too, must have asserted itself preëminently, and even in the midst of all his sufferings and sorrows the Lord must have clung to life, and dreaded death with all the power of that great, unreasoning instinct which has always made the most miserable of living things wail as if at a new misery when you threatened it with death.

"The struggle which our Lord passed through will always be the struggle of every life before it is reconciled to the necessity of death. Man loves to live and hates to die. It is not wrong. It is a part of his humanity. It is one development of his instinct of self-preservation. I believe that with every well, healthy man, with work to do in the world, an intense desire to live and do it, an intense dislike at the thought of giving it up and going away, is the healthiest and most Christian state; that any other condition is for him unhealthy and unchristian, however pious and devotional it may appear. When death rises up suddenly, full in the path of a live, vigorous man, and puts its cold hand out to draw him to itself, I believe the natural cry of the true human heart is, 'Father, save me from this hour.' And even when sickness comes and the work has to be laid aside, and the road is evidently sloping downward to the grave, still the life fears to die. The last enemy has still his terrors.

"Some men make their lives cheerless, for fear they will not be able to meet the King of terrors when he comes. Dear friends, learn from your Savior that no duty reveals itself till we approach it. The duty of death, when you approach it, will light itself up, you may be sure, and seem very easy to your soul. Till then do not trouble yourself about it. To live, and not to die, is your work now. When your time comes the Christ who conquered death will prove himself its Lord."

An Olive Tree Speaks

That night in cool Gethsemane
Christ taught us immortality.
We heard him pray beneath our boughs
And felt his wrestling spirit's vows
While high upon her ancient hills,
Jerusalem, walled in smugness, slept
Nor guessed that her own Savior wept
Beyond the Kidron's full spring rills.

We trembled with his lonely woes,
We longed to crash on all his foes,
We saw his face when he arose—a Conqueror!

So for his sake we cannot die,
But from our gnarled, decrepit root
Send up a new young slender shoot
To tell his victory to the sky.
Before our old self bows to earth,
We give a scion olive birth
To witness what we learned that night
When Christ slew death within our sight
And to our hushed Gethsemane
Entrusted immortality.—Madeline Sweeny Miller.

Other Gethsemanes

The night that Luther spent in prayer before he went to the Diet of Worms, Dr. D'Aubigne calls his Gethsemane. Luther knew that the agents of the Pope had decreed his death, he knew that his answer to the charges against him on the following day might seal his fate. In great anguish he sought the strength that comes only from prayer, and the next day as he boldly proclaimed: "Here I stand; I can do no other; so help me, God," and thereby won the battle of the Reformation, he was the calmest man in all that great assembly.

"We kneel, how weak! We rise, how full of power!
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others, that we are not always strong;
That we are ever overborne with care,
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious, or troubled, when with us is prayer,
And joy, and strength, and courage are with thee?"

When Lincoln was preparing his first inaugural, in the December after his election, he said to one of his friends, Judge Joseph Gillespie, "I see the duty devolving upon me. I have read, upon my knees, the story of Gethsemane, where the Son of God prayed in vain that the cup of bitterness might pass from him. I am in the Garden of Gethsemane now, and my cup of bitterness is full and overflowing." In the city of Newark, New Jersey, there is a most impressive bronze statue of Lincoln, the work of the noted sculptor, Gutzon Borglum, which shows Lincoln overwhelmed with sorrow, yet taking up the cross which was his to carry.

In Gethsemane
Gutzon Borglum's statue of Abraham Lincoln at Newark, N. J.

In Victor Hugo's Les Miserables we see Jean Valjean pacing up and down his narrow room all through the night, agonizing in prayer. Shall he confess, and free Champmathieu? His identity was not known; it would be so easy to keep silent and let the innocent man be punished. He fought his battle and won. After his confession of guilt the next day, he said, as he faced the electrified courtroom, "I presume that all of you think me worthy of pity. But, before God, when I think what I was on the point of doing, I consider myself worthy of envy." His struggle in his Gethsemane had made him submissive to the right, which was God's will for him, and he gloried in his triumph over self.

Pain's Power

The cry of man's anguish went up unto God:
"Lord, take away pain—
The shadow that darkens the world thou hast made,
The close-coiling chain
That strangles the heart, the burden that weighs
On the wings that would soar—
Lord, take away pain from the world thou hast made,
That it love thee the more!"

Then answered the Lord to the cry of his world:
"Shall I take away pain,
And with it the power of the soul to endure,
Made strong by the strain?
Shall I take away pity that knits heart to heart,
And sacrifice high?
Will ye lose all your heroes that lift from the fire
White brows to the sky?
Shall I take away love, that redeems with a price
And smiles at its loss?
Can ye spare from your lives, that would climb unto mine,
The Christ on his cross?"—The British Weekly.

The Purpose in Gethsemane

All those who journey, soon or late
Must pass within the garden's gate;
Must kneel alone in darkness there,
And battle with some fierce despair.
God pity those who cannot say
"Not mine, but thine," who only pray
"Let this cup pass," and cannot see
The purpose in Gethsemane.—Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

Subjects for Bible Class Discussion

1. How interpret the agony in Gethsemane. See article on The Agony in Hastings' Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels. Consider Hebrews 5.7, 8.

2. The loneliness of Christ. See Chapter XXVII of The Training of the Twelve, by A. B. Bruce; pages 438-442 of Paterson-Smyth's People's Life of Christ.

3. The problem of pain.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What were the "Seven words" spoken by Jesus from the cross? (Lk. 23.34, 43; Jn. 19.26, 27; Mt. 27.46; Jn. 19.28, 30; Lk. 23.46.) 2. Who crucified Christ? 3. What crucified Christ? 4. Why did Christ allow himself to be crucified? 5. What did the Jewish authorities expect would be the result of Christ's death?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN

Beginning the Lesson

We have had a lesson in which Jesus asked his disciples, "Are ye able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" What was the occasion? What did Jesus mean by "the cup"? What was the answer of the disciples? Today we hear how sure Peter was that he would never fail his Lord, how bitter was the cup which Jesus was to drink, and how Peter failed. What has happened between our last lesson and this?

In the Shadow of the Cross

Let us repeat the Twenty-third Psalm together. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me—this was the Psalmist's wonderful trust, and it was Jesus' as he came to the dark valley of the shadow of the cross. Reverently we approach the account of his suffering, of the agony which we cannot measure, of a mystery which we cannot fathom, and through it all we shall see the willing submission to his Father's will and the great love for all his brethren which urged Christ onward to the consummation of his mission.

It was in the Garden of Gethsemane that Jesus endured his agony. What kind of garden was it? "Today on Olivet," Dr. Fosdick writes, "the olive trees are present still, but man and locusts have diminished them and Christian churches have crowded them. On the night of Holy Thursday, when one would be alone upon the hill, crowds throng up, the automobiles honk their horns, and headlights flash into the densest shade. No longer is it easy to imagine Jesus here.

"But as the night creeps on it becomes peaceful in Gethsemane. The exact spot is quite unknown, but somewhere on this hillside the Master faced his agonizing spiritual travail beneath the olive trees. Across the Kidron below him he could look

on Jerusalem. Evening lights were shining from the temple area and tower while he was praying."

Where were the disciples meanwhile? (Continue with Explanations and Comments; see Chapter XXIX of Robert F. Horton's The Hero of Heroes.)

Strength through Prayer

Why did Jesus pray in this way? It was not because he was not brave, but because he was so human. He really shared our human life. One of the mysteries of our mental and spiritual life is the ebb and flow of feeling. Sometimes we feel exalted in spirit and able to do or endure anything. At other times, especially when tired, we are depressed and discouraged. Life seems hard, pain unendurable, duty appalling. There is much evidence that Jesus during his life had shared with us this ebb and flow of feeling. Weary with work, exhausted with hours of strenuous labor in helping others, it had always been his habit to seek during the night or in the early morning some quiet place where he could pray; and there, pouring out his heart to God and communing with him, he renewed his strength and regained the power to go back to his work. Now in this greater crisis, with the cross so near, he instinctively sought relief and strength in prayer.—George A. Barton.

Meet Temptation with Prayer

I see that Jesus conquered his temptation in the Garden by meeting it with prayer. The disciples succumbed to their temptation because they met it without prayer. In a temptation to rebellion against the Father's will, the Lord's resource was prayer. In a temptation to cowardice, that resource ought to have been theirs. Prayer would have made them conquerors, as it made him; and therefore when temptation of any kind, from any quarter, at any time, comes to me, I will listen to my Master's voice, "Why sleepest thou? Rise and pray." No temptation to any Christ-dishonoring act would ever overpower me, if it did not find me powerless through sleep of soul. If my conscience is asleep, if my love is asleep, if my godly fear is asleep, I fall an easy prey.—G. H. Knight.

Not as I Will, but as Thou Wilt

"I shall never believe in prayer again," said a broken-hearted girl, as a conversation given in The Youth's Companion tells us. "If ever anyone prayed in faith, I prayed that my mother might recover. But she died. Oh, how could God be so cruel?"

Wisely her friend answered. "There are few deaths, thank God, where no one present prays that the dear one may live. Do you suppose that the gift of prayer was given us in order that no one may ever die? Do you think God intended men to live on in growing infirmity till at last they prayed for death to save them from despair? If God gave us all we ask for—gave it to all men—we should never dare to pray. Prayer is a blessing because God knows best how to answer. God knows when to say no.

"You prayed. Thank God that you could pray. You prayed in hope, and even now you would not have it otherwise. Pray still, but pray in trust. Pray that God will give you strength for your present burdens, and light enough to follow in the path of duty, one day at a time. You said you could never pray again, but you will.

"There are no unanswered prayers. Pray that you may know your duty; pray for rest and hope and trust. With those will come peace and new courage, but not absence of sorrow. The peace and courage will enable you to bear the sorrow. That will be the answer to your prayer."

So with calmness of spirit the sad young woman faced the world again, and daily prayer gave her daily strength. In the deepening of her life and the strengthening of her character her friends discovered the answer to her prayers, even those that had seemed unanswered.

Sentence Sermon

What shall appear to be God's will, I will do.—Lincoln.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Where was Golgotha? 2. Who ordered the inscription put over the cross, and what words with the Jews did he have in regard to it? (Jn. 19.19-22.) 3. What friends stood near Jesus at the crucifixion? (Jn. 19.25-27.) 4. What does 1 Cor. 15.3 give as the reason for Christ's death?

JESUS ON THE CROSS

GOLDEN TEXT: Looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12.2

LESSON Matthew 27.1-66

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 22.1-5, 14-19, 27, 31

MATTHEW 27.33 And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, The place of a skull, 34 they gave him wine to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted it, he would not drink. 35 And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments among them, casting lots; 36 and they sat and watched him there. 37 And they set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. 38 Then were there crucified with him two robbers one on the right hand and one on the left. 39 And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, 40 and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross. 41 In like manner also the chief priests mocking *him,* with the scribes and elders, said, 42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. He is the King of Israel; let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on him. 43 He trusteth on God; let him deliver him now, if he desireth him: for he said, I am the Son of God. 44 And the robbers also that were crucified with him cast upon him the same reproach.

45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. 46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? 47 And some of them that stood there, when they heard it, said, This man calleth Elijah. 48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. 49 And the rest said, Let be; let us see whether Elijah cometh to save him. 50 And Jesus cried again with a loud voice, and yielded up his spirit.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE MORNING MEETING OF THE SANHEDRIN; THE DESPAIR OF JUDAS, verses 1-10.

II. CHRIST BEFORE PILATE; PILATE'S WIFE'S WORDS, verses 11-20.

III. THE APPEAL TO THE PEOPLE; THE MOCKERY OF THE SOLDIERS, verses 20-31.

IV. THE CRUCIFIXION, verses 32-38. They led Jesus away to be crucified, going outside the city limits, as was the custom (Acts 7.58). The knoll to which he was taken was called *Golgotha,* a word meaning *the place of the skull.* We call it *Calvary,* from the Latin word *Calvaris, a skull.* There they offered him wine mingled with gall, for it was a merciful practise to give a stupefying drink to one about to be crucified. This charitable office, Alfred Edersheim tells us, was performed at the cost of an association of women in Jerusalem. Jesus tasted but would not drink, for he wished to have a clear mind till the last.

"O Man of Sorrows, with the wounded hands—
For chaplet, thorns; for throne, a pagan cross,
Bound with the woe and agony of time,
Yet loved by children and the feasting guests—
I bring my suffering, joyful heart to thee"
(Frederick Lawrence Knowles).

The four Roman soldiers, upon whom devolved the crucifying, cast lots for his garments after their task was over. The headdress, the shoes, the outer garment, and the girdle were distributed "to every soldier a part," John 19.23, 24, and lots were cast for the possession of the seamless inner robe. Then they sat calmly down and watched him, to make sure that no one rescued him.

Over his head was placed this accusation against him, written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek (John 19.20): This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. Doubtless the placard had been affixed to the cross before it was erected. On either side of Jesus a thief was crucified. Crucifixion was terrible and disgraceful in itself, but if Jesus had hung there with nothing near him to disturb the impression of his calm

serenity and innocence, Phillips Brooks suggests, it might well have happened that the people who stood and watched would have felt the majesty of the sacrifice. "Already, that place of suffering might have seemed as glorious as it has seemed to the world since. But as it was, they went to prison and dragged out two wretched culprits who were waiting for their doom. That there might be no doubt about the disgracefulness of the Savior's sufferings, they hung him between the thieves.

"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time:
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime."

V. THE TAUNTS OF THE SPECTATORS, verses 39-44. The cross was near the public road leading to Jerusalem, and passers-by mocked him, shaking their head in the direction of the cross, as if to say, some one suggests, "That is what it has come to!"

And they that passed by railed on him. Even those today who vehemently deny that Jesus is the Christ would not make sport of the ordeal on the cross. At the close of a banquet in India a man entertained the guests with humorous stories about the gods. Stanley Jones was present, and he said the Hindu audience roared with laughter until the man began to mock Jesus of Nazareth. Then all were silent, and as he continued they hissed him from the place.

"Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself," they jeered. "This and other taunts seem to be the echoes of words said to or about Jesus at the trial, of which a report had already gone abroad among the populace" (A B. Bruce). "If thou art the Son of God," as Jesus had acknowledged at the trial, Mt. 36.64, "come down from the cross," others cried. And the chief priests and scribes and elders did not scorn to join the rabble in their mockery: "He saved others; himself he cannot save," they cried.

Note their admission that he saved others! "Malice is keener of vision than love. The priests told the truth by accident. They intended scorn, they gave praise. As the crown of thorns became the Master's crown of glory, as the shameful cross became the Master's throne, so their mocking contempt bcame a Hallelujah. It is the glory of Christ that he could not save himself if he would save others" (Lyman Abbott).

And they continued to mock him. "He is the King of Israel; let him now come down from the cross and we will believe on him." "He trusteth in God; let him deliver him now, if he desireth him: for he said, I am the Son of God." And the thieves from their crosses joined in the general raillery.

"Let me listen, not as judge, but as one who has been in the company of the callous crowd. For I, too, have mocked him! I have said, 'Hail, King!' and I have bowed before him, but it has been mock and empty homage! I have sung, 'Crown him Lord of all!' but there has been no real recognition of his sovereignty; mine has been a mock coronation. From the seat of the mocker, deliver me, Lord!" (J. H. Jowett).

VI. DARKNESS WITHOUT AND WITHIN, verses 45-49. From twelve noon till three in the afternoon, there was darkness over the land. Then Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" which Matthew translates for us, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Luther expresses our thoughts: "He forsaken? Who can comprehend it?" Dr. R. F. Horton makes this suggestion: "Jesus uttered Psalm 22.1. He had meditated on the whole Psalm as foreshadowing his experience. If on the cross he was consciously quoting the Psalm of the suffering Messiah, and the first verse was overheard, we are relieved of the difficulty which some have found in the thought that even for a moment Jesus felt forsaken by God. But on the other hand, this difficulty often disappears and becomes the deepest well of comfort in the dark hours of the Christian's experience. To know that he, our Lord and Savior, in the fulfilment of his sacrifice felt deserted by God, brings help and comfort to the trembling soul that is tempted to utter the same cry."

"If there were ever a case in which the human mind and heart unite to affirm that God ought to have intervened, to prevent the world's worst murder, it was at Calvary. Yet from out that darkness there issued humanity's bitterest cry—'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' And to that cry there came no answering miracle of deliverance. The soldier executioners were not smitten with paralysis; the reviling scribes and Pharisees were not stricken dumb. God did not intervene. If he had done, what would have been the condition of the world today? We cannot tell. But this we know, from the lips of noble unbelief as emphatically as from the hearts of believers, that that non-intervention has been the world's greatest benediction. No failure of the Christian Church, from the beginning until now, can alter the fact that the cross of Jesus Christ has been and still is the mightiest influence for the highest good amongst the most potent nations on earth. His ideal and his example abide, whatever becomes of shibboleths and organizations. To him, after the bitter pain freely borne for love's sake, there came the peace that passes understanding.—'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit'" (Frank Ballard).

Some of those near by said, "This man calleth Elijah." "The Jews said this in mockery, having many stories of appearances of Elijah to rescue men from peril of death." Then one of the guards, or some other man, seized a sponge, put it on a reed, and filled it with vinegar, and held it up for Jesus to drink. The vinegar was the sour wine which was the customary drink of the Roman soldiers. The cross was but slightly elevated, and with a short reed the sponge could be held to the mouth. John 19.28 tells us that Jesus had cried, "I thirst." The rest said, "Let me": apparently this was spoken by the bystanders and meant, Allow us to give him the drink, for they further added, "'Let us see whether Elijah cometh or not." They seem to think that if Jesus' life is prolonged, then Elijah will be given sufficient time to come, if he will.

VII. THE DEATH, verse 50. Yet again Jesus cried with a loud voice. Luke records the words: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," Luke 23.46. And he yielded up his spirit.

"Only one day must pass away,
Only one day must intervene,
Till aching eyes behold him rise;
But O, that day—the day between!" (Kate M. Cleary).

VIII. INCIDENTS AT THE DEATH OF JESUS, verses 51-55.

IX. THE ENTOMBMENT, verses 57-61.

X. THE GUARD SECURED AND THE STONE PLACED BEFORE THE TOMB, verses 62-66.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

And when they had crucified him, verse 25. The peculiar Jewish punishment was stoning. The cross was introduced into Palestine by the Romans. In Italy, this punishment was inflicted on slaves and for crimes against the State, or when special infanmy was to be attached to the death; otherwise the condemned were slain by the sword. But in Palestine the Romans thought little of crucifying Jews. Did they not belong to a despised race, a race of slaves?

In ancient times there were no executioners, properly speaking. Oriental sovereigns who were every day commanding decapitations, constantly kept executioners near them among their guards, and the Romans put their condemned to death by means of soldiers. Those of Jerusalem pertained to the auxiliary troops, always very ill made up; and it was to this brutal soldiery, habituated to cruelty, indifferent to suffering from constantly witnessing it, and unmoved by the sight of moral greatness and submission, that Jesus was given up.—Edmond Stapfer.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Along the traditional *Via Dolorosa,* or Sorrowful Way, which leads to the traditional site of Calvary, fourteen tablets mark the "stations of the cross," but it is needless to say that the way trodden by the feet of Jesus is hidden beneath the surface of modern Jerusalem, for the city has suffered siege after siege and been many times razed to the ground. No one knows where are the sites of the stations

of the cross, but the actual site of "the pavement" where Pilate yielded to the Jews and gave Jesus up to be crucified has been unearthed.

The traditional place of the crucifixion is beneath the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. The site accepted by many scholars is an oval, or skull-shaped, hill outside the city wall on the north not far from St. Stephen's Gate.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

They killed him, of course, in the end, and sometimes I am almost glad that he died at thirty-three, with youth still athrob in his veins, and never an illusion lost or an ideal dimmed by age. Claim him, you who are young and love life; let no man dispute your claim. For he, too, was young, and is. He, too, loved laughter and life. Old age and the creeds have had him too long. I offer him now to you, in deed and in truth, Jesus of Nazareth, the joyous Companion, the young Man whom young men can love.—Bruce Barton.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

CALVARY

Beginning the Lesson

Harry Lauder, as you know, lost his only son in France. This great sacrifice only served to deepen the father's religious life. He said afterwards:

"Men can no longer say that the birth, the life, the crucifixion and the death on the cross of the Son of Man does not concern them. He made the supreme sacrifice that men might have life. Probably I could not understand its full significance a few years ago. My own Laddie, my only bairn, laid down his life for his fellows. Thousands of other parents like Annie and myself have had their Gethsemane. But at the front in France I got a new vision of life and what it means. It means service; service for others."

May we not so recall the death of Christ that it shall give us, too, a new vision of what our life means?

Who Crucified Christ?

That the men who crucified Jesus belonged to a particular nationality or religion is a fact the significance of which may be more misleading than enlightening. He was not crucified by any of the classes of people whom the prophets were in the habit of denouncing.

It was not the rum-sellers or the capitalists or the representatives of organized labor who drove him to the cross. The publicans and sinners were rather courteous to him; the few rich men whom we meet in the Gospels make a fairly good showing; and from the guilds that may be held in some sort representative of organized labor Christianity borrowed some of its methods and titles, including the very name of bishop.

The motives that impelled the men who compassed the world's greatest tragedy were commonplace. If avarice played any part, it was of a petty sort; he was not betrayed for a million dollars, but for about fifteen. The cowardice and spite and hostility to unfamiliar truth were all on a rather small scale. The choice was not between Jesus and Cæsar, but between Jesus and Barabbas.

All the motives were transparent and familiar, very much like those we know and are likely to possess. We cannot afford to be too sure that the incident, or its moral equivalent, can never occur again. On that day democracy was weighed in the balance and found wanting, for the popular cry was "Crucify him!" and that in the very city which within less than a week had welcomed him with palms.

Civil government broke down, and it was the government of Rome in her glory, a government proud of its justice and equity. Ecclesiastical organization broke down, and its representatives proved bigoted and unfair and irreligious. There is no need that we should think of the matter in its theological aspects. The greatest tragedy which the world has ever witnessed occurred through motives that are as modern as they could possibly be.

Institutions and organizations have their high value; but strong character, personal integrity, honest righteousness, are the only qualities that can guarantee the world against the miscarriage of justice and the tragic ruin of human hope. Jesus was crucified by those who were accounted good men. And therein lies a solemn warning.—The Youth's Companion.

"If I Be Lifted Up, I Will Draw All Men unto Me"

More than nineteen hundred years ago Jesus Christ was nailed upon the cross by a Roman governor. The orthodox Jews who instigated Pilate to commit this infamous crime were no doubt satisfied that the great movement which Christ had set on foot had failed. Failed! It was the Roman justice that had failed. It was Jewish bigotry that had failed. An empire which has ceased to heed the voice of justice and humanity in the pursuit of its selfish interests, which are always ephemeral, is like a tree, rotten, and awaiting the first passing blast to come to the ground. The Roman Empire fell, and upon its ruins the Church of Christ rose to a great height of power. And though today Christianity but feebly reflects the spirit of its Master, the personality of the Master himself stands before the world in compelling grandeur.

Never before have so many earnest minds of all races and creeds turned to him for light and guidance in perplexities. The number and insight of new Lives of Christ are alone evidence of the fresh and deepened interest in his life and teaching.—K. Natarajan, in the Indian Social Reformer.

The Religion of the Cross

The cross teaches the world the permanent relation between suffering and saving. A savior must as a rule be a sufferer. To help others, one must have borne his own cross.

> "The mark of rank in nature is capacity for pain,
> And the anguish of the singer makes the beauty of the strain."

This may seem too severe a teaching for common life, yet it is verified almost every day. Sometimes one wants to help a friend who is in sore trouble, but somehow he cannot reach the heart of the need. There is a barrier which good intentions cannot cross. What is the matter with this ineffective kindliness? The matter is that the helper has not shared the experience which he wants to help. He is trying to reach by advice or sympathy or philosophy what can be touched by nothing else but experience of the same need. And so it happens that some other life, which has not half so much eloquence or learning, simply because it has borne the same trouble and emerged into some degree of victory, is able to reach across the silence with its hand, and the life in trouble says: "This man has borne his own cross, and so he is able to help me to bear mine." Raise that capacity for suffering to its highest power and you approach the religion of the cross of Christ. Jesus might have done all the great deeds and said all the great words reported of him, and yet have remained a teacher and preacher instead of a Savior. What draws the world to him is not the height of his genius, but the depth of his experience.

> "Christ leads me through no darker rooms
> Than he went through before."

His cross is the symbol, not only of humiliation, but also of salvation. The day of the cross is not merely the commemoration of historic tragedy, but the illumination of life by the experience of tragedy. To learn to serve, one must learn to suffer. To learn the law of service, one must learn the lesson of the cross.—Francis G. Peabody, in Mornings in the College Chapel.

Lessons from the Artists

In the Museum at Antwerp there is a picture called "The Dead Christ," painted by Van Dyke. The Savior lies at the foot of the cross, his head supported in his mother's arms. John is pointing to the motionless figure and looking at two angels who stand near; his face is full of amazement, and he seems to be asking them whether this is the end of all their hopes, but the angels have hidden their faces in their hands. On Mary's face shines the explanation. She is looking up to God exultingly, for her Divine Son has accomplished the work that God gave him to do. The Life of Sorrow ended in tragedy, the taunting and ignominy culminated in a criminal's death, but it was a triumphant, glorious death, a death that was the greatest victory the world has ever known.

In another art gallery there are three pictures which portray the soul's progressive attitude toward the Crucified Christ. In the first, a man stands before the Christ

on the cross, thoughtful, questioning; he does not understand the mystery, why God allowed the Sinless One to be crucified. In the second, the same man kneels before the cross: he has in a measure grasped the thought of Isaiah's word: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." With grateful heart he recognizes in Jesus his own Lord and Redeemer. The third picture shows the man lying at the foot of the cross: he has dedicated his life to his Redeemer's service.

Two Views

It seemed as though his life had gone for nought—
Nothing to show for that long battle fought,
But a pale prisoner to the gibbet brought:
But God saw otherwise!

We too at times come nigh to lose our hope,
When with life's evils we no more can cope,
And in the dark with heavy hearts we grope;
But God sees otherwise!—John Oxenham.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The guilt of Judas, Peter, the other disciples, Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, Pilate, the people.

2. Calvary. See pages 443-468 of Paterson-Smyth's People's Life of Christ.

3. Needless raising of anti-Semitic feeling. The protest of Jews against the motion picture "The King of Kings" led to a removal of objectionable titles and the introduction of a new prologue placing the blame for crucifixion upon Caiaphas and "other hirelings of the Roman Empire." The enemies of Jesus were Jews, but so were his disciples and other friends.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What changes have come about in Christian missions during the last years? 2. Have you tried to think realistically about the relation between the Christianity practised in America and the Christianity which we wish to have prevail in India or China or Japan? 3. Shall Christianity be one thing to the people of America, another thing to the Asiatic, yet another thing to the African? 4. Should what Christ commanded be taught in the public schools?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE SUFFERING OF THE CROSS

Beginning the Lesson

See Chapter XXXI of Robert F. Horton's Young People's Life of Christ.

A Parable

The city of Haarlem in Holland was closely besieged by the Spanish forces. The population was in dire straits for food, and as the siege dragged out its weary course week after week, the hope of the city's relief grew fainter and fainter. The most desperate attempts were made to keep up communication with William the Silent, who was struggling to bring his famous fleet—the Sea Beggars, as they were called—to the city's aid.

Well, one day, towards the end of the siege, as one of the city's brave defenders was making his way to the ramparts, he glanced up at the sky. There, hovering just within bow-shot, was a bird.

The man was hungry and, without stopping to think, he raised his cross-bow and fired a bolt. The unerring aim laid the bird bleeding and dead at his feet. Then he saw that it was a white dove—the kind of bird used by William the Silent for his messengers.

Underneath the wing of the dead bird he found a little scrap of paper, which he took hurriedly to the commander of the city. On it were these thrilling words:—

"Hold out for three days more—I will then relieve you.—William of Orange."

What new life the message put into those brave but desperate men! William was as good as his word, and in three days the city was saved. But the lovely messenger of the good news lay killed by one of those he was sent to save.

Do you see any parable in this story? Do you know of another King's Messenger—not a bird—but the King's Only-begotten Son, who came with a message, a good-news or gospel of life, to hearts besieged by sin? What happened to him? Ah! but he brought the truth. The King does come to the rescue. Perhaps you have found that true also.—A. D. Belden.

What Jesus Might Have Done

It is not only proper, it is sometimes profitable, that we should ask of ourselves what would have happened to the world if Jesus had accepted a lower estimate of his own mission and duty than that which carried him to the cross. We are not to suppose that he accepted crucifixion without a struggle, as something foreordained and therefore calling for no voluntary consecration of himself to the sacrifice. The agony in the garden is the emphatic answer to that suggestion.

The question is not what would have happened if Jesus had been wholly untrue to his mission, and had become wicked in the sight of men. All we need to ask is what would have happened if he had accepted as the measure of his obedience such standards as we assign for our own conduct when we do well, but not our best.

Suppose for a moment that when Jesus, on Thursday night of the last week of his earthly life, had assembled his disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane and had addressed them after this fashion:

"I know that you are weary, but we have a long walk ahead of us. At the table you asked me which of you was to betray me. I am glad to tell you that it was not any one of you who are with me here. It was Judas, and he has gone to do that very thing. Within an hour he will be here with a guard and a mob. There is no reason why we should wait for him. I have finished my work. My message is complete. I have given to you material for what shall be another Bible, a New Testament. There is nothing that I need add to it. I have delivered my message, and it has been rejected. The fickle mind of the public has changed. I shall gain nothing by remaining here any longer. When Judas comes, he will have with him both Jewish officials and a Roman guard. It would be useless for us to fight, and foolish for us to face tribunals where we know that justice would not be done. There is no occasion to run, but we will walk to Jericho in the moonlight. It is only eighteen miles, and down hill all the way. We shall arrive at dawn. Our friend Zacchæus will welcome us. We shall rest tomorrow in his home, and then we will cross the Jordan and take up our work in a new place."

It could have been done. Judas and the guard would probably not have followed. Jesus could have escaped without any reasonable charge of cowardice. But he would not have done his best. And the world would never have heard of him. Only he and God would have known that he had failed.—The Youth's Companion.

When Defeat Is Victory

On Palm Sunday the people sought to do Jesus honor as they would do honor to a victorious king. Yet it was a strange kind of victory to which Jesus came. For five days he was in Jerusalem with his enemies watching him sullenly. Then on Friday they took him out to Calvary and nailed him to a cross. He died on that hill and it seemed as though he had been defeated. Those who hated him mocked and sneered, and said, "He saved others, himself he cannot save." They laughed at the idea he was a conqueror then. What more could he do that men needed to be concerned with, now that he was crucified and dead?

Yet as the years have gone on, we know better and better that Jesus was not defeated. He was a Conqueror, just as he seemed to be on Palm Sunday. He was victorious in a far more wonderful way than even the people expected that day. Death could not destroy him. He rose again. His living spirit came back to his disciples, and they knew him. He said he would stay close by them forever. They might not see him with their bodily eyes, but he would be there. His life would touch their lives and make them strong.

And that is the way it has been all down through the years. Jesus Christ seems more powerful now than he was when he lived in Galilee. The finest men and the finest women conquer wrong things and have strength to do the hard, brave

things all through the years, because Jesus speaks to their hearts and bids them be like him.

So it is not what happens at one particular moment that determines whether we are conquered or are conquerors. It is not the way things look outside, but what we are inside that matters. If our own hearts are brave and faithful, in the long run nothing can defeat us. And that is true even of those who seem to die.

One of the noblest books which has been written in our time is the story of the journey to the South Pole by Captain Robert F. Scott and his companions. Over the ice and through the bitter cold of the Antarctic Ocean they journeyed on until they reached the very end of the earth, and then they started back toward their ship and safety; but they were not to arrive. The cold grew more terrible. Blizzards blew the blinding snow into their eyes. Day by day their strength was waning. One of the men saw that he had less strength than any of his companions, and he saw that he was holding the others back. So one night, very quietly, he said good-bye to Captain Scott and walked out of the little tent which they had pitched, into the blizzard. He never came back; for he knew that without him they could go ahead faster, and might have a better chance to save their lives. There on that white field of ice, the rescuers, who came later to find Captain Scott and his friends, put up a cross, and on the cross is this inscription: "Hereabouts died a very gallant gentleman, Captain L. E. G. Oates of the Inniskillig Dragoons. In March, 1912, returning from the Pole, he walked willingly to his death in a blizzard, to try and save his comrades beset by hardships."

Captain Scott and one companion who was left went on farther, but at length the blizzard stopped them, too. When the rescuers came and found his body in the tent, they found on his knees the journal which he had been writing, and this is what he said: "How much better it has been than lounging in too great comfort at home. I do not regret the journey, which has shown that men can endure hardship, help one another, and meet death with as great fortitude as ever in the past." That seemed to be defeat, but it was also victory.

So it is not what happens *to* us, but what happens *in* us that supremely counts. Whenever we conquer our own fears, whenever we do with finest courage the thing we have to do, then, no matter what the results may seem to be at the moment, we are victorious, and we are counted as those who have been successful in the eyes of God.—W. Russell Bowie, in Chimes and the Children.

A Picture of Christ on the Cross

I read once of an artist who was desirous of painting the picture of the three crosses on Calvary. He painted first the face of the unrepentant thief; that was easy, for he had seen many men like that. Then he painted the face of the repentant thief upon whose face the light was breaking as he got a glimpse of the other world; that was harder, for he had never seen a face of just that kind. But after weeks and months of endeavor he was measurably satisfied. Then he painted the central cross and the central face. He tried day after day, week after week, month after month to paint that face, but failed. Then in despair he seized his brush and simply put upon that central cross one great burst of light—and he could not have done anything more inspired than that if he had worked a thousand years. That is what it was—a great burst of light. There was the agony, and out of that comes the light that reaches down to you and me.—Francis J. McConnell.

I Love Him!

J. D. Jones of England, speaks of an old English villager who went up to London, and visited one of the great picture-galleries. Presently he came upon a wonderful picture of the crucifixion. As he gazed upon it, his whole soul caught fire. Tears came to his eyes. "Bless him!" he exclaimed aloud; "I love him! I love him!" Others in the gallery looked on at first with startled curiosity and then with deep emotion. One of them approached the countryman, and, gasping his hand, exclaimed, "And so do I!" A third came up, "And so do I!" And then a fourth, and there stood before the picture of the cross a little group of men, perfect strangers to one another, who were united by their common love for Christ.

Sentence Sermons

"All this I did for thee,
What hast thou done for me?"

THE RISEN LORD AND THE GREAT COMMISSION

GOLDEN TEXT: Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations. Matthew 28.19

LESSON Matthew 28.1-20 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 116.1-9

MATTHEW 28.1 Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. 2 And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. 3 His appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow: 4 and for fear of him the watchers did quake, and became as dead men. 5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, who hath been crucified. 6 He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. 7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples, He is risen from the dead; and lo, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. 8 And they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring his disciples word. 9 And behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. 10 Then saith Jesus unto them, Fear not: go tell my brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

16 But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. 17 And when they saw him, they worshipped *him;* but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: 20 teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE EMPTY SEPULCHER AND ITS MESSAGE, verses 1-6. The Gospels do not describe the resurrection; they report it simply and briefly. Matthew tells of the visit of Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to the sepulcher late on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, as Sunday, the first day of the week, began to dawn. Mary Magdalene was from Magdala, a city on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, who had been freed from "seven demons," Lk. 8.2, and who is often wrongly confounded with "the woman who was a sinner" of Lk. 7. "The other Mary" was the mother of James, Mk. 16.1. These two had been present at the crucifixion and the burial, Mt. 27.56, 61.

Matthew adds here, what no other Evangelist does, that there was a great earthquake and an angel rolled the stone away and sat on it. His appearance was dazzling, like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; through fear of him the watchers trembled and became as helpless as dead men. The Greek word for angel means *one who is sent as a messenger.* The angel "answered" the look of amazement and fear of the women and said: "Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus who hath been crucified." "The *for* gives a reason for the soothing tone of the address. The angel recognizes them as friends of the Crucified" (A. B. Bruce). Then he added the amazing news: "He is not here; for he is risen even as he said." See Mt. 12.40; 16.21; 27.63. "Come," he further added, "see the place where the Lord lay." The condition of the tomb as seen by Peter and John is described in Jn. 20.5-7.

II. THE GLAD MESSAGE, verses 7, 8. They were not to stand long in mute amazement, but were to carry the glad news to others: "Go quickly, and tell his disciples, He is risen from the dead; and lo, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you." Recall his promise to the disciples, Mt. 26.32.

"The Lord is risen indeed,
He is here for your love, for your need—
Not here in the grave, nor the sky,
But here where men live and die;
And true the word that was said:
'Why seek ye the living among the dead?'" (Richard Watson Gilder).

III. CHRIST APPEARS TO THE WOMEN, verses 9, 10. The women departed quickly with fear and great joy (how natural were both emotions here!) and ran

to bring the disciples word. Their fear and joy were greatly augmented when Jesus himself met them, saying, "All hail!" Casting themselves down before him they took hold of his feet and worshipped him. Kindly Jesus reassured them: "Fear not: go tell my brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see me."

This lesson should come home with special power to the hearts of Christian women, for to women was first given on Easter Morning the command to go and tell that Christ is risen.

IV. THE BRIBING OF THE SOLDIERS, verses 11-15. A guard had been placed at the tomb by the chief priests (Mt. 27.62-66) and they at once reported to the latter what had happened. Here was astonishing news, which must not become known, or they, the priests, would lose all they had expected to gain by putting Jesus to death; therefore, after taking counsel, they bribed the soldiers to say that "his disciples came by night and stole him away while we slept." Death was the penalty for falling asleep on the watch, therefore the priests promised the soldiers that they would "rid them of care," for if this reached the ears of Pilate they would "persuade him" with money; Pilate was a bribe-taker, as Philo says. So they agreed. The falsehood which they started was "spread abroad among the Jews until this day," the time of the writing of Matthew's Gospel.

The Sepulcher inside the Garden Tomb

V. THE FINAL INTERVIEW AND COMMISSION, verses 16-20. The eleven disciples went to the mountain in Galilee where Jesus had appointed a meeting. It may have been the mountain where he was wont to go for prayer; it certainly was a well-known meeting place, and there Jesus came to them—the appearance which probably is to be identified with the one mentioned by Paul in 1 Cor. 15.6, when he was seen by "above five hundred at once."

When Jesus appeared in their midst some recognized him and worshipped him; others (not the eleven) doubted. All during his earthly life, and now also after all these centuries, Jesus Christ was a divider of men.

"All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth"; in these words Jesus asserted his royal authority; his right to command rested upon the fact that he is King. The future of his Kingdom was his supreme concern, and he proceeded to issue his royal command: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name," i.e., confessing the name, "of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you"—to live worthy of their high calling, as Paul expresses it. "Therefore," because he had universal authority, his disciples claimed the world as his, and went upon a universal mission—to all the nations.

And they obeyed the command. "We hear so much of the Jews who crucified Jesus," Rabbi J. Leonard Levy observes; "we hear so little of the Jews who were kind to him. We are very seldom reminded that Paul, who was his great apostle, called himself 'a Hebrew of the Hebrews.' We are very rarely told that it was Jewish women who attended Jesus in his last hours; that it was Jews who proclaimed him to the world; that it was Jews who took his name beyond the confines of Palestine; that it was Jews who died in his honor."

"'Go ye!' the Master says. That, first and last,
Is Heaven's commission unto all who come
Into the kingdom. Yonder beat of drum
Resounds, and 'Forward!' calls the bugle blast" (James Buckham).

And then Jesus gave them his wonderful words of comfort and encouragement and cheer—"Lo, I am with you always"—not will be, but am—"even unto the end of the world."

"Go" and "lo"—these are correlated words: with the activity in speeding the gospel must be associated the consciousness of Christ's abiding presence. "Shall I tell you what sustained me in my exiled life, among strangers whose language I could not understand?" Livingstone asked the students of Glasgow University. And then in the hush that followed he said, "It was this that comforted me at all times: 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.'"

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

See the Easter Lesson, for April 20.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

The Bible is the greatest missionary book in the world, and the Sunday School is the greatest missionary force in our country. We know something of what the missionary societies have done, something of what the laymen's movement is accomplishing, and something of what the churches and adults everywhere are doing for missionary causes, but we have little realization as yet of what the Sunday Schools of the land are doing and of what they yet shall do. The evangelization of the world is our great objective, it can be realized only by enlisting the youth in the undertaking. In colleges the young people are hearing the summons, and in young people's organizations they are studying world problems and in Sunday Schools the children are being taught to give for the cause, but the Sunday School, this greatest of all missionary forces, cannot be rightly informed and aroused unless each individual teacher has the desire and the ability to do his part in carrying out the Great Commission.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE GREAT COMMISSION

Beginning the Lesson

Among the Moravians daily services are held during Holy Week, and on Friday as the hour of Christ's death on the cross approaches, the gloom is said to be almost unbearable. But on Sunday morning early, as it begins to dawn, their churches are found brilliantly lighted and filled with flowers, and the joyful music is then contagious. Very early indeed the people have been awakened by the choir that goes through the streets singing the Easter hymn and playing on trombones. When the services are over the people enter the cemetery and among the graves of their friends await the resurrection hour. Just as the sun appears they sing their glad, exultant song, and they believe its words, that Christ is risen.

Another beautiful fact about their faith is that they obey Christ's parting commission. Their missionary zeal exceeds that of any other denomination. How does our missionary zeal stand? How does the Great Commission read? Can we face God with the proverbial excuse of a New York policeman: "Sorry, it's off my beat"?

What the Apostles Did not Say

Most of the apostles died outside of Palestine, though human logic would have forbidden them to leave the country until it had been Christianized. The calculating instinct is death to faith, and had the apostles allowed it to control their motives and actions, they would have said: "The need in Jerusalem is so profound, our responsibilities to people of our own blood so obvious, that we must live up to the principle that charity begins at home. After we have won the people of Jerusalem, of Judea and of the Holy Land in general, then it will be time enough to go abroad; but our problems, political, moral, and religious, are so unsolved here in this one spot that it is manifestly absurd to bend our shoulders to a new load."

Go Ye Therefore

Christians are called together in the church service in order that they may make disciples of the community, the state, the nation, the world. Followers of the Christ are to assemble each Lord's day morning that they may know the will of God as manifested in his Son. The service is to put them in remembrance of him,

and the communion of the Lord's Supper is in particular so designed. Thence from the House of God the worshipers are to go home, seeking to build their households after Christian ideals; to return to the realm of business, and there set up standards of the Christ; others to the realm of politics, and there express in law and spirit the ideals and principles of the Christ.

In his little volume entitled Prayer Changes Things, S. D. Gordon imagines a conversation between Christ and the angel Gabriel, soon after the ascension. Gabriel is asking Jesus what plans he has made to let all the world know how he lived and died and rose again. And the Master is supposed to reply, "I asked Peter and James and John, and some more of them down there, just to go and make it the business of their lives to tell the others. And the others are to tell others, and the others yet others, and still others beyond, till the last man in the farthest reach has heard the story, and has been thrilled and thralled by the power of it." But Gabriel looks as if he could see difficulty in the Master's plan, and he says, "Yes, Master, suppose after a while Peter forgets. Suppose John loses his enthusiasm and simply doesn't tell the others. Suppose their successors away down there in the twentieth century get so busy about things—some of them good things—church things maybe—suppose they get so busy that they do not tell the others? What then?" And back comes that quiet voice of the Lord Jesus. He says, "Gabriel, I haven't made any other plans. I am counting on them."—Edgar DeWitt Jones, in Ornamented Orthodoxy.

Teach them to Observe All Things Whatsoever I Commanded you

But what has the human race done to this teaching of the Teacher of religion? It has woven into his basic teaching about human behavior the most intricate tangle of philosophy and metaphysics. It has made certain credal statements necessary to salvation. It has divided the Christian world into sects and denominations, some of which have violently denied to others the right to call themselves true Christians. It has magnified the importance of certain words and theories about which Jesus himself never uttered a word. It has involved the basic matter of human behavior toward God and the neighbor with nonessential and trivial discussions over doctrines that have nothing whatever to do with the way a man behaves. It has built up a system of forms and ceremonies about the thing called Christianity that are as far removed from the teaching of Jesus as he was removed from the scribes and Pharisees of his own time.

It is because the whole definition of religion has been obscured and debased by all his doctrinal and formal treatment of it by theologians and controversialists that the problem of introducing the teaching of religion into an educational system has become a matter of debate and fierce argument, and refusal to acknowledge the right of religious training except in the home and in the church.

But I have been wondering what sectarian interpretation could be put upon the Ten Commandments, or the Beatitudes; or, for that matter, upon the entire life of Christ.

If religion cannot be taught, why did Jesus tell his disciples to teach it? If it can be taught safely only in the church and in the home, how about the millions of youth that never have any religious instruction in either of those places, but are in daily attendance on the public school? If the teachers now employed cannot be trusted to teach religion, is it because they do not have any, or is it because they have a wrong definition of it? Or is religion in the very nature of the case a thing that belongs to the emotions, a thing which one has to learn for himself and which no course in education can teach?

Religion cannot be taught in our educational system if by religion is meant controversy over matters that are not connected with behavior. But it can be taught and it must be taught if by it we mean what Jesus meant when he said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." If that cannot be taught in our educational system, then the system is wrong. If it can be taught, in the name of him who came to give us life abundantly, let us incorporate it into the very heart of our schools, putting it first of all into the hearts of our teachers.—Charles M. Sheldon, in The Atlantic Monthly.

The Response of Christian Missions to Changing the World

The first recourse of Christian people in the face of an overwhelming task is to summon each other to greater devotion, faith, prayer, and sacrifice. The greater the

difficulty, the greater the call for faith and consecration, without which the missionary enterprise would die. But there are limits to the efficacy even of faith and sacrifice. Do we of today pretend that we will surpass the missionary pioneers and martyrs in the exercise of these virtues? Has the unstinted devotion of thousands of such saints during the last one hundred years brought final victory? The history of modern missions forces us to the confession that, indispensable as intensity of devotion may be, it does not move all the mountains, and something else is needed if the world is to be won for Christ.

Recognizing this fact, there has been a constant call for what might be termed greater intensity. The methods of high-pressure salesmanship were introduced into the missionary enterprise, in the expectation of securing corresponding results. We have since discovered, however, that there is a limit, a saturation point, beyond which Christian people will not give continuously and uniformly. There is also a limit to those things which may wisely be done for another, even with all the resources in the world. No, not even the combination of intensity of resources is sufficient to establish the Kingdom of God in such a world as this.

Of late, missionary leaders are seeking as never before to gain greater efficiency in their organization and methods. Now for the first time it is proposed to call to the aid of the missionary undertaking all the help which sciences concerned with human development and education can offer, hoping thereby to give greater efficiency to "those efforts and processes which help to bring children and adults into a vital and saving experience of God as revealed in Christ."

A fourth response to the changing world takes the form of a new attitude which is struggling for birth. The characteristic attitude of the Christian of the last century to the non-Christian was benevolence. Benevolence is kindness extended by a superior to an inferior, by one who has to one who has not. But with increasing insistence this outside world is refusing to take the position of an inferior, and is resenting both the benevolence and the complacent dominance of the Western World. It is for this reason that four of the five subjects which occupied the attention of the delegates at Jerusalem had to do with attitudes and relationship; namely, The Christian Life and Message in Relation to non-Christian Systems, The Relation between Younger Churches (abroad) and Older Churches (at home), The Christian Mission in the Light of Racial Conflict and Industrial Developments, and finally, International Co-operation. Thus, in council chamber and in the give and take of life's relationships, Christian people, and especially those engaged in the work abroad, are striving to overcome past habits of mind and bring themselves to the place where they can sincerely recognize the good as well as the evil in other religions and cultures, where they will be willing to give justice in economic and international dealings, even if it is to their own hurt; to the place where they can substitute a spirit of co-operation, fraternalism, and reciprocity for the older attitude of domination, paternalism, and superiority in the manifold relationship of nations, races, churches and individuals.—Condensed from an Article in The International Journal of Religious Education, by Archibald G. Baker.

Is There an "American Christianity"?

In a German Church Paper which came to my desk recently, a writer used as a common phrase, "American Christianity." In the spring of 1925 we heard in central Europe mutterings such as this: "The Stockholm conference stands for an 'Anglo-Saxon Christianity.'" Emil Brunner, of the school of Karl Barth, published in 1923 a little book in which he berates "Amerikanismus" in religion. What is this dreadful thing which central Europeans think that Anglo-Saxons, and particularly Americans, are doing to Christianity? What is it in our religious life which awakens criticism in honest seekers after the way who dwell in other lands? As the fish may live in water but know it not, as the bird may soar in the air but have no knowledge of air, so may we often live in atmospheres of thought, of outlooks unknown to us because they are so near, so much a part of our very selves. A fish may wonder "What is water?" And I reflected, "What is 'American' Christianity, 'Anglo-Saxon' religion?"

Peace, among men, and classes, and races, and nations, is more and more seen to be, not a matter of political expediency, but of religious concern and Christian devotion—the logical implicate of the Christ-way of love. We don't know so much about the kingdom in heaven, but we do agree that the kingdom should come here on earth, and we do mean to put our hand to the plough and bring it about. God,

we say, is working with us. God himself, we believe, is anxious to remove slums, and bitter strikes, and imperialism, and exploitation, and peonage, and we pride ourselves on being fellow-workers with God for the regeneration and renovation of the social order.

This is the air we American Christians breathe, and take as much for granted as the fish must in supposing that to live in water is the only normal way to live. But for many Europeans, this way of social thinking in religion is "Anglo-Saxon," this way is "American." This is the religion of doing, which, they say, is a part of our national and racial temper. We must up-and-at-it or we haven't had a successful meeting. And, even if the committee or the conference hasn't thought its way clear through to the bottom of the problem, inevitably we must not separate until at least a resolution has been passed which is to be sent to the President, or a program is adopted which calls for action. It is the will, the voluntaristic strain, which predominates in our national church life, they say, which makes us utilitarians, social workers, world and society transformers, in the name of a social gospel.

And these critics of American Christianity—what do they charge us with omitting or neglecting, which they cherish and adore? If we pour our energies into the saving of this world, from what have we drained our energies? They answer us very quickly: "You have lost the power of profound reflection upon God. You have failed to plumb the depths of heaven-penetrating worship. Your ears are so full of the whirr of your church mill-wheels that you have not attuned your ears to the music of heaven."

Have we lost the sublime? If there is an Anglo-Saxon Christianity, is it the case that we are right and others are wrong? Or are they right and we wrong? Rather, each of us needs the other's point of view; each needs to fill out his weakness with the other's strength. Certainly if the social implications of Christ's way have not yet become widely clear to those whose thoughts have loved to linger with God, we pray for the fuller interpretation of the heavenly vision in the earthly round. But, as certainly, if we have become strong in world-betterment and in discernment of the modes of feeding the hungry and clothing the naked and supplying the cup of cold water to his little ones, we need to root these things more deeply in the heavenly vision of divine vistas of the meadows of God. In each case it is true, these things ye ought to have done and not have left the others undone.—Condensed from an Article in The Christian Century, by Thomas R. Kelly.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The Jesus of the resurrection. See Chapters XXVIII and XXX of The Training of the Twelve, by A. B. Bruce; pages 475-490 of Paterson-Smyth's People's Life of Christ.

2. Questions discussed at a Student Volunteer Convention:

Is the day of missions over? If not, of what should modern missions consist?

What have missions accomplished that is of value, and at what points have they manifestly failed?

Are there abiding values in non-Christian cultures and faiths that we of the West have failed to recognize and therefore left unrelated to Christianity?

Can we honestly and sincerely advocate the carrying of the message of Christ from countries which obviously fail to practise that message?

Are we sure that Christ is *the* way and not merely *a* way?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

OUR MARCHING ORDERS

Beginning the Lesson

See Chapters XXXII and XXXIII of R. F. Horton's Young People's Life of Christ.

The Great Permission

You remember that in one of our lessons we read about Jesus' sending his disciples on a mission. To whom did he bid them go? They were not to enter into any city of the Samaritans, but were to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And in his talk with the Syro-Phœnician woman he said that he was sent but to the lost sheep of Israel.

But in his last message to his disciples, to whom did Jesus bid them go? We call this command the Great Commission, a term meaning that a great duty has been committed to the care of Christ's followers. The command has also been well called the "Great Permission," for the making disciples of others is the great privilege of true Christians. Coupled with the Great Commission was a great promise: what was it?

The Great Promise

When you turn to the last of Matthew and read, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," what do you see—the Jesus of history, back among his disciples after they had forever given him up, or a Jesus whom sometime, away off in the future "end of the world," you yourself will see as they saw him? Or rather do you think of him as the Comrade who has placed himself beside your life and is *now,* this day, and this minute, a quiet Partner in all the worth-while things that you think and say and do?—Helen Thoburn, in Studies in Knowing Jesus Christ.

How You Can Obey the Orders

In the current number of The American Magazine, Neil M. Clark starts an account of a famous physician in this way:

On a sunny Sabbath morning in mid-winter, a bishop was walking down Michigan Boulevard, in Chicago, bound for his church. Suddenly, an expertly-aimed snowball whirled through the air and sent his "topper" flying, a hopeless wreck. He turned to see a ragged urchin making a hasty get-away.

"Boy," the bishop cried, "come here!"

It would be hard to say what caused the boy to obey. But he did. And, strangely, he was not greeted by a scolding, but by an arm pleasantly thrown about his shoulders, and with a heart-warming smile.

"My hat furnished you a first-rate target," said the bishop; "now, will you do something for me?"

The boy's wary eyes held a query, and a doubt.

"I want you to come to my Sunday School," the bishop explained. "We'll show you a good time, and you will find lots of friends."

They made a queer pair, the ragged urchin and the dignified but bare-headed bishop, as they walked down the street and turned into the church. But the incident proved to be the beginning of a friendship that lasted without a break until the bishop's death. For the boy, it was a turning point of a lifetime. Until then this nine-year-old lad had roamed the streets, half-wild, often legging it away swiftly from the police. His home was behind a saloon. He and his two pals sold papers on the edge of one of the toughest districts in the city.

Thirty years and more have passed. Of the three newsboys who were pals and ran wild together, two are in the penitentiary serving life terms for murder. The third, whom the bishop befriended, is known as one of the foremost physicians in this country.

"I was a pretty wild sort of boy when I knocked off Bishop Cheney's hat with a snowball, and got invited into his Sunday School," he said to me. "I'm satisfied that if it hadn't been for that incident I'd probably be where my chums that used to sell papers with me are—behind the bars! I was headed that way. But Sunday School gave me new ideas. I began heading in a different direction."

"Make disciples of all the nations"—of everybody, Jesus bade. You cannot go to other nations as a missionary, but there are many boys and girls in your own city or town who are not Christ's disciples, but who might be if they were brought to your church school. Can you not find and bring them?

Another Way in which you Can Obey the Order

It may seem a trifling thing to do, to send religious pictures and papers to eastern lands, but missionaries and native preachers and teachers find them a tremendous help in telling the gospel story.

An American physician from the Margaret Williamson Hospital at Shanghai was waiting recently at the station for the train from Hangchow. As she was pacing the platform she noticed two Chinese lads were gazing curiously at her. She wished she could talk to them, but she could not speak Chinese well enough. Like an inspiration came the thought of some picture-cards which were in her hand-bag, left over from Sunday School the day before. "I told the stories in as good

Chinese as I could command," she writes, and was surprised that they seemed to understand so much. I invited them to come to Sunday School to learn more about Jesus, and continued my walk. When I turned to come back, there was a man leaning over the boys, and as I passed they were explaining the pictures. Soon another joined the group and then another. A wonderful opportunity came as I told them why I had left my own native land. For most of my listeners this was the first time the old, old story had been told. To them it was new and wonderful."

"Every picture means a scholar," the World Wide Sunday School News declares. "Bible lesson pictures, both large and small, are eagerly received at practically every mission station abroad. This applies especially to the large picture rolls which are used in almost every Sunday School in the home lands. Such pictures form the basis for Sunday School teaching and evangelical preaching and should be forwarded to some missionary at the end of each quarter. The cost for postage is only about eighteen cents.

"The World's Sunday School Association has had since 1909 a surplus Material Department, which learns the needs of the missionaries in the various denominations and gives a card of introduction to those who will send their pictures abroad for this special purpose. The plan provides that you write to Rev. Samuel D. Price, D.D., Superintendent of this Surplus Material Department, 216 Metropolitan Tower, New York City, indicating your denomination in full and stating what you have to send. You will then receive the name and address of a missionary in your own church or of some interdenominational worker, also a leaflet giving full information including the postal rates. You will then forward your packages directly to the foreign field. Do not mail any packages to the office in New York.

"Small Bible Lesson cards, picture post cards and any other suitable pictures will also be very serviceable. A picture is greatly valued by adults as well as children. Many Sunday Schools are built up through the use of such pictures. If you paste a piece of white paper over the writing on a picture post card, the missionary will place a verse of scripture, in the local language, thereon.

"There are many requests also, where English is spoken, for illustrated papers, such as those which are used in many of our home schools. Frequently the papers are not all distributed. This is especially true on rainy Sundays and in the summer season. These should be saved, and when four pounds have been accumulated, they may be sent to a needy missionary. Workers in the Philippines are asking for papers for the older scholars. There is also a need of such papers and magazines among the sailors and lumbermen of North America.

"Scrap books made up of pictures cut from magazines and papers, especially those in colors, bring joy and instruction to the boys and grils across the Seas. Ask your Sunday School to make scrap books. It is better to make many small scrap books than a few large and handsome ones. They are a joy to the child abroad and also to the adult. The patients in the hospital find pleasure in them. Use any stiff paper —say 11x17 inches; take four sheets, fold in the center, and stitch. Then paste pictures on the sixteen pages. Get Bible pictures and scenes typical of America and its customs. Use pictures of churches, homes, children at play, railroad engines, etc. Fill a page with canceled postage stamps. Do not write in the book, for this would greatly increase the rate of postage. Have a Sunday School Missionary Social, and ask all who come to bring materials. The books may then be made up during the evening and a lively interest created in Foreign Missions.

"Money for postage and freight is also needed. Some are eager to assist who cannot conveniently forward pictures. A number of the larger Publishing Houses are giving supplies in wholesale quantities to this Department for the mere cost of forwarding them to the foreign field. Over 2,500,000 pictures have been furnished in this way. Money is always greatly needed to place these gifts in the hands of missionaries.

"Personal introductions are furnished which generally bring letters from the missionaries to those who supply the postage."

Sentence Sermons

Every Christian is at least a minor missionary.—Christina Rossetti.

"Jesus Christ alone can save the world, but Jesus Christ cannot save the world alone."

REVIEW

GOLDEN TEXT: Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Matthew 16.16

DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 2.2-4

ATTEMPTS AT APPRAISING CHRIST

In the triumphal procession of the Roman conqueror, kings and princes walked as captives in the emperor's train. Thus all the greatest men of the past generation seem to have joined Christ's triumphal procession. Let us call the roll of the great. Among Carlyle's last words were these: "The most important event ever transacted in this world is the life and death of the Divine Man in Judea, at once the symptom and cause of innumerable changes to all people in the world." By acclamation, John Ruskin will be voted the first place among the English prose writers of the last two centuries. But Ruskin says his life "has been dedicated not to the study of the beautiful in face and flower, in landscape and gallery, but to an interpretation of the truth and beauty of Jesus Christ." Another modern humanist is Matthew Arnold. But, dying, Matthew Arnold said: "Christ came to reveal what righteousness really is. For nothing will do except righteousness; and no other conception of righteousness will do, except Christ's conception of it—his method and secret." James Martineau asserts that Christ must be called "the regenerator of the human race. The world has changed and that change is historically traceable to Christ." We all know that Shakespeare, perhaps the greatest intellect ever known in its wide and many-sided splendor, paid the lowliest reverence to Christ in passage after passage. All the great poets of our age, Lowell and Longfellow, Browning and Tennyson, unite in saying,—

"Thou seemest human and divine;
The highest, holiest manhood thou;
Our wills are ours, we know not why;
Our wills are ours to make them thine."
—Newell Dwight Hillis, in The Influence of Christ in Modern Life.

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

Read a quotation to your class, and let all who recognize the allusion signify this. Then recall the lesson by a few questions.

To go through life and plead at the end of it that we have not broken any one of the commandments is but what the servant did who kept his talent carefully unspent, and yet was sent to outer darkness for his uselessness.—Froude.

We shall be sifted till the strength
Of self-conceit be changed at length
To meekness.—Longfellow.

A photographer makes a sensitive plate, exposes it to just the rays of light that he chooses, dips it into the proper solutions, and holds it up to see if his picture is there. What else did this Great Teacher do on that day but hold up souls to the light to find out if the reflection of the Son of God were fastened there?—J. M. Stifler.

And in the hereafter, an angel may
Roll the stone from the grave away.—Whittier.

The mistake of humanitarianism is making the second the great and first commandment.—Philip Schaff.

I would ride the camel,
Yea, leap him flying, through the needle's eye,
As easily as such a pampered soul
Could pass the narrow gate.—Southey.

There strutted the turkey, and crowed the cock,
With the selfsame voice that in ages of old had
Startled the penitent Peter.—Longfellow.

Thou also hast had the world's buffets and scorns,
And to thy life were not denied wounds in the hands and feet and side.
—Lowell.

Lord, grant us grace to love thee so
That, glad of heart and glad of face,
At last we may sit high or low,
Each in his place.—Christina Rossetti.

My name
Be yoked with his that did betray the Best.—Shakespeare.

There is a sighing in the pallid sprays
Of these old olives, as if they kept
Their pitying watch, in Nature's faithful ways,
As on that night when the disciples slept.—Katherine Lee Bates.

The first question in the Bible was, "Adam, where art thou?" It had to do with one's individual standing before God. The second question was like unto it, "Cain, where is thy brother?" On these two personal relationships, that of a man to his Maker and that of a man to his fellow-man, hang all the law and the prophets.—Charles R. Brown.

O man! forgive my mortal foe
Nor ever strike him blow for blow;
For all the souls on earth that live,
To be forgiven must forgive.
Forgive him seventy times and seven;
For all the blessed souls in heaven
Are both forgivers and forgiven.—Tennyson.

QUESTIONS UPON THE QUARTER'S LESSONS

For Young People and Adults

1. Describe two important events in Jesus' life.
2. What questions has Jesus answered, and how did his answers show his wisdom?
3. How has Jesus shown himself master of controversies?
4. What method did Jesus employ to check the ambitions of his disciples?
5. How did he teach that the least important human being is precious in God's sight?
6. What was Jesus' teaching about cross-bearing?
7. What had Jesus to say about the sin of neglecting and misguiding children?
8. How did Jesus teach the lesson of stewardship of service?
9. What purpose did the Triumphal Entry serve?
10. On what occasion and why did Jesus call for human sympathy?
11. How do you explain Peter's denials?
12. What was Jesus' program for the world?

For Intermediates and Seniors

1. Tell an important fact about each of the following: Peter, Judas, Pilate, Gethsemane, Calvary, Resurrection.
2. Tell an important fact about the rich young ruler, James and John, Mary Magdalene, Cæsarea Philippi.
3. What parables have we had this Quarter?
4. Tell the parable which shows God's care for every one.
5. Tell the parable which teaches God's forgiving Spirit.
6. What is the lesson of the Parable of the Talents?
7. What did Jesus say about the commandments?
8. What was his teaching in regard to greatness?
9. How did Jesus teach the lesson of Christian preparedness?

10. Tell the story of Gethsemane.
11. Why was Jesus crucified?
12. Tell what happened after the resurrection.

QUESTIONS UPON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

1. What was Matthew's aim in writing his Gospel?
2. What is Matthew's arrangement?
3. What five great addresses are given only in Matthew?
4. Give a general outline of the Gospel.
5. How is the Gospel of Matthew valued?
6. Where in the Gospel of Matthew is the Parable of the Lost Sheep?
7. The Parable of the Unforgiving Debtor?
8. The Parable of the Talents?
9. The conversation with the rich young ruler?
10. The account of the crucifixion?

A REVIEW OF CHRIST'S WORDS

Complete the following:

1. Upon this rock—.
2. Whosoever would save—.
3. Whoso shall receive—.
4. Even so it is not the will—.
5. If thou wouldest enter—.
6. It is easier for a camel—.
7. If any man would come—.
8. Render therefore unto—.
9. Except ye turn and—.
10. With men this is—.
11. For what shall a man be—.
12. Whosoever therefore shall humble—.

WRITTEN WORK

For Young People and Adults

1. The popularity of Jesus.
2. The Opposition to Jesus.
3. Jesus as a Controversialist.
4. What is Christian Stewardship?
5. Some experiences of the Disciples in the School of Christ.
6. The Ideal Life. (A review of Drummond's Book with this title.)
7. Characteristics of the Gospel according to Matthew.

For Intermediates and Seniors

1. The Friends and the Enemies of Jesus.
2. An Account of the Story you like Best.
3. The Lessons Taught the Disciples about Riches, Greatness, Stewardship.
4. The Afterlife of the Rich Young Ruler.
5. A Conversation among three High School Students who Represent the Men in the Parable of the Talents.
6. An Imaginary Conversation between the Wise and the Foolish Virgins.
7. The Chief Events Recorded or Subjects Taught in Each Chapter of Matthew's Gospel.

QUESTIONS TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

For Intermediates and Seniors

1. Who are the four patriarchs of Genesis? 2. Where was Abraham born? (Neh. 9.7; Acts 7.2-4.) 3. Where was Ur, Haran, Canaan? 4. What does our first selection tell us about Abraham? 5. What characteristics of Abraham does our second selection show? 6. Did Abraham take risks recklessly or thoughtfully? 7. What is Abraham called in 1 Ch. 20.7? 8. Mention some great names in the pioneer days of our country and tell what qualities they had which fitted them for their task.

For Young People and Adults

1. How has God revealed himself to man? 2. Of what great Babylonian king was Abraham the contemporary? 3. What incidents in Abraham's life show his great courage? 4. His cowardice? 5. His magnanimity? 6. His friendship with God? 7. His purposefulness? 8. Was Abraham a mystic? 9. Do you believe that God has a plan for every one's life?

"Magnanimus" is the Latin word composed of "magnus," great, and "animus," mind. "Magnanimus" means great of mind, raised above what is low, mean, or ungenerous; that quality or combination of qualities in character, as Webster defines it, which enables one to encounter danger and trouble with tranquillity and firmness, to disdain injustice, meanness and revenge, and to act and sacrifice for noble objects. He is truly a noble man who is a magnanimous man.'

IV. ABRAHAM'S COVENANT WITH GOD, Genesis 17.1-8.

V. ABRAHAM'S INTERCESSION FOR LOT, Genesis 18.22-33.

VI. THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM, Hebrews 11.8-10. Abraham's obedience to the call shows his great faith, for he went out, not knowing whither he went. His course illustrates that great definition of faith, as substantiating things hoped for, evidencing things not seen.

"Abraham had no knowledge of the ultimate goal, but he was perfectly sure of the present direction. And so it is with divine guidance today. The Lord does not light up the entire road leading from the calling to the goal. He just lights up the bit of the road we have to travel today, and the rest is still in darkness" (J. H. Jowett).

Notwithstanding that the land had been promised to him for an inheritance, he made no permanent settlement there, but dwelt in tents with Isaac and Jacob, for his heart was set on the heavenly city, the city without foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Jehovah said unto Abraham, Genesis 12.1. The Koran gives this tradition of the way in which Abraham learned to know Jehovah. When night overshadowed him, Abraham saw a star, and said, "This is my Lord." But when it set, he said, "I like not those that set." And when he saw the moon rising, he said, "This is my Lord." But when the moon declined, he said: "Verily, if my Lord direct me not in the right way, I shall be as one of those who err." And when he saw the sun rising, he said: "This is my Lord, for this is greater than stars or moon." But when the sun went down, he said: "O my people I am clear of these things! I turn my face to him who made both heaven and earth!" We can hardly doubt, remarks Samuel Cox in The Expositor, that it was in some such way as this that Abraham was convinced of the impotence of the gods of light and fire whom his fathers propitiated with human sacrifices, and was taught to turn to him who made the sun to rule by day, and the moon and the stars to rule by night; for it is thus in all ages, God prepares men to know him.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Book of Genesis

The word *Genesis* means beginning. It is a Book of Beginnings, and also a Book of Heroes. Part I, Chapters 1-11, gives the prehistoric stories; the great characters are Adam and Noah. Part II, Chapters 12-50, gives the patriarchal stories; the great characters are Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. Nearly fourteen chapters out of the fifty in the book are devoted to Abraham.

The Time of Abraham

Abraham was a contemporary of Hammurabi (the Amraphel of Gen. 14.1), whose reign in Babylon is assigned by scholars to 2200 or 2000 B.C.

Appraisement of Abraham

"From the great mists of the distant past," writes Professor Rogers, "we have seen a very noble figure appear. Many and beautiful are his virtues. (1) He is a man of great generosity (Gen. 13.10, 11). (2) He exercises in noble fashion the gracious gift of hospitality (Gen. 18.1-8). (3) He is profoundly religious, and all his acts and words breathe the delicate odor of worship and devotion. Well, indeed, may Israel be proud of him, happy indeed are we to have such a father after the spiritual, if not after the physical—Abraham, Friend of God."

In the words of Professor Ira M. Price: "Abraham's life is a kind of source-book of Jewish history, literature, and doctrine. The narrative of his experiences, of

glimpses of his outer and inner life, of his aggressive energy, of his devotion to Jehovah as the God of the Hebrews, furnishes random examples of the fruitage which may be expected from a life based upon the principles of righteousness."

The Eleventh Chapter of Hebrews

This chapter illustrates the power of faith. It opens with a definition of faith, and proceeds to give examples of faith from the primitive history in the early chapters of Genesis, then from the patriarchs, especially from Abraham, on through Moses and the Judges, and then by a few striking allusions to outstanding names in the later history it recalls additional famous deeds of faith.

Abraham's Home

Abraham, like Saul of Tarsus, was "a citizen of no mean city." Ur, his birthplace, was in his day a port near the Persian Gulf, on a great ship canal. The northern part of the Gulf has since been filled in by the soil brought down by the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, and the site of Ur is now one hundred and twenty-five miles away from the Gulf, not far from the union of those rivers. Excavations here have resulted in most interesting discoveries. Our cut at the head of this lesson is from an inlay work of shell, lapis lazuli and pink limestone wrought by a craftsman of 3500 B.C. It was found in a side chamber of the oldest of the royal tombs by the Joint Expedition of the British Museum and the Pennsylvania University Museum to Mesopotamia. In the upper row the king and his court sit and eat; in the lower rows servants bring the materials for the feast—sheep and oxen, goats, fish, etc.

Abraham's Journey

Haran, to which Abraham went with his father Terah, was about five hundred miles northwest of Ur. Like Ur, it was a center of the worship of the moon-god. The route taken by Abraham from Haran to Canaan must have been across the Euphrates by the ford at Charchemish, and south past Hamath and Damascus to the waters of Merom and down the Jordan Valley on the west, or from Damascus down the east side of the Jordan and thence across a ford south of the Sea of Galilee to Shechem in the center of Canaan, some three hundred miles in all.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

We have heard Jesus invite men into companionship with him: "Follow me," he said. And as his disciples companied with him, he said to them, "Abide in me, and I in you . . . I am the vine; ye are the branches." Religion is loyal companionship with Christ, with God.

Today we turn back in thought to a very beginning of Biblical history, and find that to Abraham religion was friendship with God. Is there one of your pupils who thinks of religion as consisting in believing certain statements? Is there one who thinks of religion as the obeying of certain laws? Lead them to see today that religion is friendship. "Religion is a conscious and eager and gladsome personal relationship, in both the great and the little things of daily life, with an infinite and personal Friend who is the very heart and soul of the universe."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

A MAN WHO FOUND FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD

Beginning the Lesson

"Look at Abraham," Paul counsels when writing to the Galatians and again in his letter to the Romans. "Look at Abraham," is James' counsel in his famous chapter about faith. Let us look at Abraham, the pioneer man of faith, the man who found friendship with God. Among all the men and women mentioned in the Old Testament, he is the only one who has the high honor of being called the "friend of God" (Isa. 41.8; 2 Ch. 20.7). Among the Arabs he is known to this day as El Khalil, Friend of God.

We think of Palestine as the ancestral home of the Jews, but they came there originally from a far country. The very word *Hebrew* shows this in its derivation from *eber,* beyond.

It was a time of great tides of emigration from the east westward. Colonists from Babylonia were coming to Assyria; Aramæans were going northward up the

Euphrates and settling in the eastern borders of Syria; Semitic tribes were gradually displacing the old Cushite inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula. Professor de Ujfalvy dates the arrival of the Aryans in the Punjab about the year 2000 B.C. The difference between Abraham's migration and that of these others was in the motive back of it. The others were driven forth by their desire for larger fields and greater possessions, by the love of conquest, or by the stronger hordes behind them: Abraham was impelled by the desire to obey the will of God. The other migrations were of whole tribes; Abraham left not only his country but his kindred and his father's house.

The Aftermath

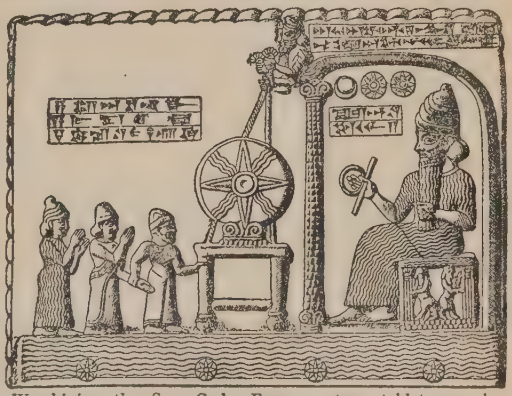
Abraham arrived, what then? He went on journeying. Was there ever a tamer conclusion to a great adventure? He journeyed and journeyed, week after week, and at last he arrived, but there was no sudden sign, no miraculous revelation, no empty territory waiting to be occupied—"the Canaanites still occupied the country" (Gen. 12.6). Therefore the only thing to do was to keep moving on. Abraham would be tolerated if he was passing through the land; he would not be allowed to settle. So the journey to the land simply became a journey in the land.

But God had a new encouragement for his trustful servant. When Abraham had reached "the oracular oak at the shrine of Shechem" (Gen. 12.6), evidently a sacred tree in a place held to be sacred, there came the confirmation of the original promise, "I give this land to your descendants." It was not a fulfilment of the promise, but a renewal. That was enough for Abraham. He must recognize God definitely. "He built an altar on the spot to the Eternal who had appeared to him." That was his way of claiming the promise. He did not hasten to fight or worry to plan or chafe at delay. He said by his action, "God is here," and moved on again. At his next prolonged halting place, he built another altar and worshiped again. That was his method. He did not build fortresses, he built altars. These were the landmarks he made. "Then Abraham traveled on still southward" (Gen. 12.9).

We are all apt to want to hurry God. We cry, "How long? How long?" as soon as the first venturous journey is over. Abraham's patience was as wonderful as his initiative. We must learn the same lesson. If God has been before us, if he is here in the strange new surroundings and shows himself to be here, then let us be content. It is his plan, always has been his plan. He is in charge. Our business is to recognize him and to rest in him, and do the daily job, even if it seems to mean there is no end to the journeying, to the need for adaptation and activity. We cannot better Abraham's method. He was a past master in the art of the Great Trek according to the Will of God.—R. C. Gillie.

The Tremendous Discovery that Abraham Made

In the British Museum there are on exhibition antiquities from Ur, Mesopotamia, which have been unearthed in recent years. They tell the story of a civilization extending back for more than a millennium before Abraham was born. Long before Abraham's time Ur had been the capital of a great empire. Abraham was a sheikh of a nomadic tribe on the outskirts of this great city. With his father Terah, his nephew Lot, his own wife Sarah (Gen. 11.31) he journeyed on to Haran, five hundred and fifty miles northwest of Ur. The people of Ur and of Haran were polytheists, but they recognized the Moon-God as supreme among their gods. A traveler in Mesopotamia writes that no one who has seen the moon "walking in brightness" across the open face of the Mesopotamian sky, dominating the desert, mysteriously near, can wonder that the people reverenced the Moon-God as supreme. There is a psalm of that epoch to the Moon-God:



Worshiping the Sun God. From a stone tablet now in the British Museum

"In heaven, who is supreme? Thou alone, thou art supreme!
On earth, who is supreme? Thou alone, art supreme!"

"Here we see the human soul trembling on the very verge of monotheism," R. Newton Flew comments. "Yet in the history of Babylonian religion the last step is never taken, the line never crossed. Only in the sacred book of another faith are we told that one man made a great venture of faith, staked his own life and the life of his tribe upon the belief that God is One, and went out on a vast journey, not knowing whither he went.

"Probably Abraham feared for the people entrusted to him. We have clear evidence from the monuments that the kings of Ur just before the time of Abraham erected shrines in their own honor, and claimed to be worshiped as gods. It was like the Cæsar-worship of New Testament times. It is quite probable that we are to interpret the migration of Terah and Abraham as a moral protest against the growing degeneracy of the life of Ur. The family clung to the simpler life of the desert amid the more complex and corrupt city-culture of the time. Such simplicity of outlook went together with the intuition of Abraham that the Supreme Being was One. Is not that the way in which anyone still may make the discovery of God for himself? He clings to the highest that he can see, and stakes his whole life on it, whatever the cost. So Abraham found God."

Abraham's Attitude toward God was True

Abraham was far from faultless, but in the portrait which Genesis gives us we find his attitude toward God was always right. Great religion has been defined as great fellowship of man with God; and Abraham with all his faults was a man of great religion.

Abraham was a very rich man. He was rich in cattle, in silver and in gold (Gen. 13.2; and in the 24th chapter his servant refers to his wealth). But no one ever gives much thought to Abraham's possessions; no one ever refers to him as Abraham the Rich. No, we speak of him as the Hero of Faith, the Father of the Faithful, and, best title of all, as The Friend of God.

The Book of Genesis represents Abraham as speaking with God as familiarly as we speak with any friend of ours. "Do ye ken (know) Jesus?" one little Scottish lad asked another. "Oh, but do ye ken him to speak to?" the little fellow persisted. There is a great difference between knowing some one and knowing that one "to speak to." Abraham knew God to speak to; in the story of his life we see how constantly he talked with God, and trusted in God, till we do not wonder that he was given the beautiful name of "The Friend of God."

"There is no more splendid ideal for God in the Scriptures and no loftier teaching concerning men than that God and man can walk together in friendship and companionship," writes Bishop Francis J. McConnell. "It may be interesting to push this ideal of friendship between God and man out into something of its implications. There is implied, to begin with, a willingness on God's part to accommodate himself to men. In the Scriptures the relationship between men and God is spoken of as a walk together. We most often think of walking with God as a lengthening of the human stride to keep pace with the Divine. The half truth should not blind us to the other half, namely, that the walk with God requires that God accommodate his step to the pace of men."

Faith Is Vision Plus Valor

Faith is holding reasonable convictions, in realms beyond the reach of final demonstration, and, as well, it is thrusting out one's life upon those convictions as though they were surely true. Faith is vision plus valor.

As it is exercised in the religious life, such faith is the supreme use of an attitude which we are employing in every other realm. Each day we act on reasonable probabilities, hold convictions not yet verified, take risks whose outcome we cannot know, and trust people whom we have barely met. In order to live we must have insight and daring. It is not alone the just who live by faith; lacking it, there is no real life anywhere.

That "Chinese" Gordon, on his hazardous expedition into the Soudan, should be thrown back on undiscourageable faith in himself, in the justice of his cause, in the bravery of his men, and in God; that he should even speak of praying his boats up the Nile, seems to us natural; for some kind of faith is obviously necessary to any great adventure. But men often forget that all ordinary living is

essentially adventurous, and that by this fact the need of faith is woven into the texture of every human life. It is an amazing adventure to be born upon this wandering island in the sky and it is an adventure to leave it when death calls. To go to school, to make friends, to marry, to rear children, to face through life the swift changes of circumstance that no man can certainly predict an hour ahead—these are all adventures. Each new day is an hitherto unvisited country, which we enter, like Abraham leaving Ur for a strange land, "not knowing whither he went," and every New Year we begin a tour of exploration into a twelve-month where no man's foot has ever walked before. If we all love tales of pioneers, it is because from the time we are weaned to the time we die, life is pioneering.

With all his science, man must face each day, as Paul faced his journey to Rome, "not knowing the things that shall befall me there" (Acts 20.22).

Among all the faiths which mankind has cherished and by which it has been helped in life's adventure, none have been more universally and more passionately held than those associated with religion. In the daring experiment of living, men naturally have sought by faith interpretation not only of life's details but of life itself—its origin, its meaning, and its destiny.

How radiant the spirit of the venture as the New Testament depicts it! The stern, appealing love of God behind life, his good purpose through it, his victory ahead of it, and man a fellow worker, called into an unfinished world to bear a hand with God in its completion—here is a game that indeed is worth the candle—Condensed from The Meaning of Faith, by Harry Emerson Fosdick.

For Bible Class Discussion

The Character of Abraham. See Chapter I of Great Characters of the Old Testament by W. W. Rogers; Chapter IV of The Story Books of the Early Hebrews, by Charles Reynolds Brown ($2.00); pages 1-54 of The Birth of a Nation, by Charles Brown.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Why was Jacob with all his faults better fitted than Esau to be Isaac's successor? 2. What natural surroundings may have led Jacob to dream of a ladder to heaven? 3. What did the ladder symbolize? 4. What was the primitive belief as to pillars set up for worship? 5. What do you dislike and what do you approve of in Jacob's prayer? 6. Was it a mark of weakness in Jacob to plan so diplomatically for the meeting with Esau? 7. How would you characterize Jacob as a young man? 8. As an old man?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

PIONEERING IN AN UNKNOWN COUNTRY

Beginning the Lesson

October twelfth—what does that day mean to you? What remarkable characteristics had Columbus? Of Columbus it has been written:

"Thou bearest through all doubts and fears
The spirit of the coming years;
Tomorrow's light is on thy sail,
Tomorrow's voices cry thee Hail,
Tomorrow's many-millioned host
Are crowning thee on some far coast,
O king and conqueror thus to find,
A fair new world for all mankind!"

Who were some of the fearless souls that followed Columbus? (The Cabots, Magellan, Balboa, John Smith, the Pilgrims, Peary, Macmillan, Scott, Lindbergh, Byrd.)

Were there great pioneers before Columbus? Who? Herodotus, Pythagoras, Marco Polo—but we have not gone back far enough. Whom may we call the first great pioneer in an unknown country? What do we know about his journey to Canaan?

The Resemblances in the Lives of the Two Abrahams

Consider the first of the resemblances of the two Abrahams. "By faith." Men

are variously gifted. From the beginning of time God has dowered his sons with manifold gifts. Moses had a genius for law; Joshua for war; David for psalmody; Angelo for sculpture; Savonarola for reform; Shakespeare for rhythms; Beethoven for harmonies; Webster for eloquence. Thus does each of the starry names shine on in the firmament of history, shedding forth a splendor all its own. But Abraham, the Chaldean, does not belong in the illustrious company whose names have been called. He was gifted in another direction and in a higher fashion, if possible. His was the gift of faith. He could see the unseen; he could touch the intangible; things that seemed not he dragged out into the realm of things that are; he could start out surefootedly from Nowhere, walk an unknown road, realize a solid foundation every step of the way, and arrive in due season in the City of God's Eternal Somewhere.

Now, I am among those who hold that faith also was the supreme gift of our Western Abraham. I know Carlyle said that no ruler in history has made so much of prayer and faith in God as Oliver Cromwell; but Carlyle said that because he did not know or appreciate the faith power and praying passion of Abraham Lincoln. It was by faith, and not by genius, not by brilliance, that our wilderness pioneer, weaponed with the keen-edged ax of justice, went out to chop down the dark and terrible slave forest which had become rooted in our American soil. "Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not themselves," said he, "and, under the rule of a just God, cannot long retain it." Faith in the rule of a just God—that is the power that saved the Union. It was by faith that this modern Abraham went forth to speak his word and do his deed for God and mankind. Lincoln was led by faith, inspired by faith, wrought superhumanly by faith, has become agelessly masterful by faith! "Faith in God," he said, "is indispensable to successful statesmanship."

Consider, moreover, the providentialness of the two Abrahams. "By faith Abraham when he was called." The philosophy of divine calling seems to be this: God has a purpose to be realized in the fields of Time; he wants a man in the soil of whose being that purpose can root itself; then he hunts his man, sometimes hunts him for ages. Finally tracking his man down to the Heart of Things, God says: "Come. I need thee, and thou needest me. Henceforth we must be workers together." Abraham was a providential man—provided man—for a gigantic task.

So also, Lincoln's providentialness is as assured as Abraham's. He, too, was called of God. God's voice is as familiar to the Big South Fork of Nolen Creek in Kentucky or the Sangamon in Illinois as it is to the Tigris or the Euphrates. It has the same tones and carries the same message, east or west, up or down. God made his world with perfect acoustic properties, though most people have fashioned unto themselves exceedingly dull ears. I think God called Lincoln because he was the only man equal to the job. The work required a leader wrought out of the ages; peculiar ancestral gifts were essential; a unique environment was necessary—one so schooled in the University of Hard Knocks that he could come away with a diploma signed by Wisdom itself. Not the palace but the cabin; not the academy of the classic grove, but the law circuit of the frontier; not the forum, haunted by Tully's periods, but the slave mart, mournful with the moans of the oppressed; not plenty, but poverty; not pomp, but pity—these were the hard and glorious settings of that soul greatly gentled and wondrously strengthened by God. Therefore, when the task was ready to be done, this man was God's answer to his own self-fulfilling purpose.—Condensed from a Sermon by Frederick F. Shannon.

A Great Pioneer in an Unknown Country

Livingstone told his friends in England that he "could only feel the way of duty" if he went out as a missionary. The cap he wore might be the consul's cap, but the head under it was thinking out the strategy of a Christian campaign. Thomas Hughes called him the greatest Puritan traveler. Through the whole marvelous pilgrimage, from Blantyre to Ilala, that is what he was. Time and thought simplified his creed and strengthened his faith. Honor and fame sat lightly on him. His heart was set on the supreme values. It was not to solve the problem of the Nile or to complete the circuit of the inland lakes that he endured incredible fatigues, marching with bleeding feet and slackening strength through swamp and forest and across the blistering plains. It was primarily to end an oppression, to save perishing and suffering humanity, and to preach the gospel, in which he well knew

lies the only permanent guarantee of human freedom.—From an address by C. Silvester Horne.

The World's Valuation of a Great Question

One thing that Lindbergh's flight made clear is the unchanging love of the human race for the adventurer, the man who risks his life for some great end that is not to be measured in terms of money. This is an age of materialism, no doubt; most of us are thinking of what we can get out of the world for ourselves and our families. You often hear it said that one has no choice; he must, if he is to get along in the world, lose no opportunity to better his financial condition. But the World War showed us how unquestioningly the young gave up everything, even life itself, for something greater than themselves, pitiful and tragic as the sacrifice was. And now the hardened, cynical, dollar-chasing old world has shown us that at bottom the man whom it really loves and admires is the man who scorns the things it professes to value most highly; the man who risks his life in a great quest and who will not take the world's pay when he succeeds. Whatever Lindbergh's flight means to aviation it means more as a demonstration of the incurable idealism that lies deep in the human heart.—The Youth's Companion.

The Greatest Pioneer of Faith

Here is a world of men, ignorant, wandering, lost. Who will go to save the world, to show men the way out of their misery and sin and get them in touch with God's. "I will," said Jesus. Some one has imagined Jesus starting out all alone on his mission to save the world. "Are you prepared to pay the price," God asks, "to leave all you have, home and friends and loved ones?" Jesus replies, "I am." A little later God asks, "Are you still willing to go on with it, to watch the crowds deserting you, to face censure, ridicule, and shame?" Without hesitation Jesus answers, "I am." Then looms the cross. "Will you go on?" God asks. "I will," replies Jesus. And then they nailed him to the cross and left him there to die, with nothing done, without one person who really understood him, his whole plan falling into utter ruin, his dream become ridiculous. "Dare you pay the full price for it?" asks God, and Jesus replies, "I will." And it is only because he did not turn back, but paid the uttermost it would cost, that the world is being saved, is finding its way to God.

Oh, the Christian life lived at its best is an adventure! You may remember how the man with the stout countenance in Pilgrim's Progress, after weighing the difficulties of the Christian life, went forward and said: "Set down my name, Sir, for I have looked this whole thing in the face, and cost me what it may, I mean to have Christlikeness and will." This is the spirit of the Christian pioneer. What is Christlikeness? It means a life free from anxiety, a life morally clean; it means pioneering, engaging in the great adventure of saving the world, of saving men from sin, from slavery, from poverty, from ignorance, from war; living cleanly, unselfishly, lovingly, generously.—Condensed from an Address by Clarence P. McClelland.

Sentence Sermons

We know not what the path may be
As yet by us untrod,
But we can trust our all to thee,
Our Father and our God.—William J. Irons.

Unselfish and noble acts are the most radiant epochs in the biography of souls.—Thoreau.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. How many chapters of Genesis are devoted to the story of Jacob? 2. Who was Jacob's father, and what relation was he to Abraham? 3. How did Jacob deceive his father? 4. What does Hebrews 16 call Esau, and what does the word there mean? (Unspiritual: he was profane in the sense of having no regard for sacred things.) 5. What were some of the evils that befell Jacob on account of his craftiness with Esau? 6. What reference to Jacob's experience at Bethel is there in our hymn, Nearer My God to Thee? 7. What characteristics of Jacob do you dislike? 8. What characteristics do you admire?

JACOB (A Selfish Man Transformed)

GOLDEN TEXT: For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life? Matthew 16.26

LESSON Genesis 25.19-34; chapters 27-33; 46.28 to 47.12
DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 19.7-14

GENESIS 25.29 And Jacob boiled pottage: and Esau came in from the field, and he was faint: 30 and Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red *pottage;* for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom. 31 And Jacob said, Sell me first thy birthright. 32 And Esau said, Behold, I am about to die: and what profit shall the birthright do to me? 33 And Jacob said, Swear to me first; and he sware unto him; and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. 34 And Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: so Esau despised his birthright.

28.18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. 19 And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of the city was Luz at the first. 20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, 21 so that I come again to my father's house in peace, and Jehovah will be my God, 22 then this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

29.18 And Jacob loved Rachel; and he said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter. 19 And Laban said, It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man: abide with me. 20 And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her.

33.1 And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau was coming, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids. 2 And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost. 3 And he himself passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. 4 And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.

18 And Jacob came in peace to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan-aram; and encamped before the city.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. JACOB TREATS HIS BROTHER MEANLY, 25.29-34. See The Historical Background. One day Jacob prepared pottage, a dish made of lentils or small beans, and Esau, his brother, coming in faint from the field, begged for it. "Therefore was his name called Edom," *Edom* means *Red*: Esau had red hair and red complexion, and it was red pottage for which he sold his birthright: all these things combined to give him the name of Edom, and his descendants were called the Edomites.

"Sell me first thy birthright," Jacob demanded, taking a mean advantage of Esau's exhaustion and hunger. By the birthright he meant the rights and privileges of the first born, which later, at least, included a double portion of the father's property and succession to the headship of the family, priestly rites, and in the family of Abraham heirship to the covenant privileges. Mean as Jacob's proposal was, it shows that he appreciated the value of the birthright, as Esau, who cared only for the gratification of the present moment, could not.

"Behold, I am about to die," Esau exclaimed—he was "tired to death," as we so often say with as little truth—"and what profit shall the birthright do to me?" Jacob knew that when Esau's hunger was appeased Esau would repent his bargain and break it as readily as he had made it, so he asked Esau to swear solemnly to abide by it, which Esau did. It was a sharp bargain that Jacob drove, how sharp Esau did not realize, for he was not noble enough to appreciate the birthright's value. He had his bread and pottage and went his way: so he despised his birthright. His birthright was nothing that he could see or eat or drink, and therefore he could not appreciate it.

There is a story in Pilgrim's Progress about two children, Passion, to whom we may compare Esau, and Patience, to whom we may compare Jacob.

"Passion wanted all her good things now, but Patience was willing to wait, and the things that Passion got were things that she soon tired of; but those that were given to Patience were things that made her glad for ever."

II. JACOB'S DREAM AND THE IMPRESSION IT MADE, 28.10-17. On his way to Haran Jacob came to a hillside near Bethel and spent the night there. There was nothing better at hand for a pillow than the stones about him, and one of these he used. The sun hung low in the sky and just before falling asleep he must have gazed upon the rocks and stones so abundantly strewn around him, and in his dream they naturally shaped themselves into a ladder, or flight of stone steps (in Hebrew and also in Arabic the word translated *ladder,* we are told, means also *staircase*). On his dream-ladder the angels were ascending and descending, symbolizing the thought that there is communication between God and man. And then in his dream Jehovah appeared beside him and spoke words of encouragement and hope.

Before this, Jacob knew of the existence of God, but now for the first time he learns that God is accessible. When living at home, his life made comfortable by the favoritism of his mother, there was no room in his mind for a revelation from God. When alone on the hillside, with no one to help him, he was susceptible to divine influence. Providence often thus prepares the way for revelation.

In his dream Jacob heard God promise that he should inherit the land and that his descendants should be "as the dust of the earth" in number, and in him and in them "all the families of the earth should be blessed," and then the assurance of God's companionship and guidance.

Jacob had thought of God as belonging to the Israelites alone, and not to be found beyond the limits of their land, and on awakening he exclaimed in surprise, "Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I knew it not! How dreadful (awe-inspiring) is this place; this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven (the place where earth and heaven meet)."

"The dredges in the river deepen the channel: an awe is a dredge deepening the life" (J. H. Jowett).

III. JACOB'S WORSHIP AND VOW, 28.18-22. Jacob arose early and set up, as a sacred "pillar," the stone he had used for a headrest and consecrated it by pouring oil upon it. And he called the name of the place *Bethel,* which means *House of God.* The city near by was originally called Luz, but it was also afterwards known as Bethel. "The God of Bethel" has become a phrase for God's ever-watchful care.

Then Jacob vowed a vow (verses 20-22) which sounds to us like a bargaining prayer, as if for such and such prosperity he would make such and such return. In the dream God had promised all that Jacob here bargains for, and possibly we may read the conditions as causal, thus: Since thou wilt do all these things for me, I in return dedicate my tithes to thee. Such vows were common among the Israelites: Num. 21.1-3; Judges 11.30, 31; 2 Sam. 15.8.

"Many centuries have passed since then, but there are a great many men and women in Christian communities who think that prayer is only a shrewd bargain. Their question is not, How can I do God's will in the world? but, How can I get God to help me accomplish my will in the world? And they do not often, perhaps, make him as generous a bargain as did Jacob; they do not often, perhaps, give him a tenth of their income" (Lyman Abbott).

IV. JACOB AND RACHEL, 29.18-20. See The Historical Background. The years of serving seemed to Jacob but a few days, for the love he had to Rachel. He was constant and true in his affections, whatever he was in other matters, "and no hardship quenched his love—nay, when a whole lifetime intervened, and he lay dying in Egypt, his constant heart still turned to Rachel, as if he had parted from her but yesterday."

V. JACOB AND ESAU RECONCILED, 33.1-18. See The Historical Background. Jacob looked and beheld Esau in the distance with his four hundred men. "Esau had probably just been engaged in that warlike expedition to Mount Seir, which resulted in his conquest of the land where he afterwards settled, and this accounts

for his appearance at the head of an armed band," suggests Dr. Edersheim. "Possibly he may, at the same time, have wished to have the revenge of giving anxiety to his brother, or he may to the last have been undecided how to act towards his brother."

Jacob gave the safest place in the rear to his best loved ones, Rachael and Joseph, and hastened ahead to meet his brother. Seven times he bowed himself to the ground on his way to Esau, thus showing Esau the greatest reverence. Esau ran to meet and embrace him, and the reconciliation was complete.

"For still in mutual suffrance lies
The secret of true living:
Love scarce is love that never knows
The sweetness of forgiving" (Whittier).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

And poured oil upon the top of it, 28.18. Excavations at Taanach and elsewhere have revealed mazzebahs, or altars, in which holes have been cut. It is believed that these holes were made to receive the libations, whether of blood or oil, offered to the numen, or deity, supposed to reside in the stone. The belief that a stone was the abode of a numen is still prevalent among primitive people. Isaiah 57.6 speaks of libations poured out by idolatrous Israelites to the "smooth stones of the valley," and Jacob's anointing with oil the stone which had been his pillow may have had some relation to this ancient belief.

Stones, images, etc., are anointed in idolatrous countries to this day, and the whole idol is generally smeared with oil. In Catholic countries when a church is consecrated, the doorposts, pillars, altars, etc. are anointed.

This stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house, 28.22. "Rough cairns and monoliths seem to have been the first structures of worship everywhere, the first 'houses of God.' There were many *Beth-El* stones in Palestine, just as the sacred black stone at Mecca is still the great *Beit-Allah* of the Moslems. And in Greece at Delphi, anterior to any constructed temple, there were rude stones anointed with oil by all the pilgrims who visited them, as Jacob's stone was anointed. And when we see the British Cromlechs we see similar sacred memorials of some far off moment when our ancestors experienced something which made them strangely aware of Deity. All these rough stones are the progenitors of our towering cathedrals and mosques and temples in the civilized world."

Bowed himself to the ground seven times, 33.3. Actions that seem to us cringing servility, and words—my lord, my lord Esau, thy servant Jacob—that seem no less so, are not so held by oriental people. Jacob was an oriental, and orientals have always indulged in tokens of respect which do not seem to them extravagant and fulsome. The seven-fold prostration is a favorite formula of homage in the Tel Amarna tablets: "At the feet of my Lord, my Sun, I fall down seven and seven times."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Last Days of Abraham and the Life of Isaac

Either at Gerar or at Beersheba Abraham's long-promised son Isaac was born, and the record tells of the trial of the father's faith when he believed himself called upon to sacrifice Isaac. To prevent Isaac from marrying a Canaanite woman, Abraham sent his servant to Mesopotamia in search of a wife for his son, and the latter returned with Rebekah. To Isaac and Rebekah twin sons were born, Esau and Jacob.

In a good old age Abraham died and was buried in the field of Machpelah. Isaac lived an uneventful life, and is noted chiefly for his policy of non-resistance, shown in his patience in moving on and digging new wells, leaving to his enemies the old ones they coveted.

The Background of Genesis 25.29-34

Twin sons were born to Isaac and Rebekah. Esau, the first born, became a skillful hunter, a man of the field, and was his father's favorite. Jacob, a quiet man, dwelling in tents, was the one whom Rebekah especially loved.

The Background of Genesis 28.18-22

Esau's selling of his birthright is the first event recorded in which Jacob by his craftiness got the better of his brother. The second time was when Jacob, with his mother's assistance, robbed Esau of his father's blessing, Genesis 27.

Both Rebekah and Jacob were soon forced to pay the penalty of their treachery. Esau's anger was so great that he openly declared he would kill Jacob upon his father's death. Rebekah counseled Jacob to escape to her kindred in Haran, and remain there until his brother's anger cooled. A pretext was easily found to gain Isaac's consent. Esau had married two Hittite women, "and they were a grief of mind unto Isaac and Rebekah." Rebekah persuaded Isaac that there was danger of Jacob's also taking a Canaanite wife "such as these." Jacob was thus able to depart with his father's blessing, going, not as a fugitive, but as a visitor to his unknown kindred in Haran. Rebekah bade him remain "a few days," but the days lengthened into years, and she never saw him again.

Bedouin Sheiks of Today

The Background of Genesis 29.18-20

On arriving at Haran, Jacob received a warm welcome in his mother's former home. He chose his cousin Rachel for his wife, but unlike Eliezer, his father's messenger for the hand of Rebekah, he brought with him no rich gifts and was obliged to serve her father seven years for her.

The Background of Genesis 33.1-18

Jacob the trickster was himself tricked at Haran. He was given Leah, the older daughter, instead of Rachel. Seven years longer he served Laban for Rachel, and yet other years for his sheep and cattle. He prospered, and Laban and his sons became jealous. Jacob deemed it was time to leave. With only a staff he had passed over the Jordan on his way to Haran. Now he started back with a retinue large enough to be divided into two bands, with wives and maids, eleven sons and one daughter, men-servants and women-servants, camels and oxen and cattle and sheep.

At Mahanaim he awaited the return of messengers whom he had sent into the land to announce his return to Esau. They brought back the startling message that Esau was on his way to meet him with four hundred men. Jacob was panic-stricken. Was not Esau coming to avenge the wrong done him, and was he, Jacob, not face to face with the consequences of his past? Humbly he prayed God to deliver him from Esau, acknowledging his own unworthiness. Then he sent on drove after drove of animals to appease his brother.

Midnight came. He had already sent across the Jabbok his animals, his children, and his wives, and he was alone. He found himself in the grasp of a mysterious combatant, who wrestled with him till break of day. Neither prevailed till toward morning Jacob's thigh was put out of joint. Horace Bushnell calls the story a parable acted, a case where the lesson is taught, not by words but by something done. "I will not let thee go except thou bless me," cried Jacob. "What is thy name?" "Jacob." "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God, and with men, and hast prevailed." And Jacob called the place Peniel, that is, "The face of God."

His name was changed because his character was changed. The double-dealing, crooked-working man is honest and true at last; the self-trusting man has become God-trusting. From this time onward, though he does not lose his politic self-resourcefulness, he becomes more and more "a prince of God, a just and God-fearing Israelite."

The Geographical Background

Beersheba, in southern Canaan (later Judea) on the edge of the wilderness, is the scene of our first selection.

Jacob's journey from Beersheba to Haran in Mesopotamia took him up to Bethel and Schechem, across the Jordan and on to Damascus, and across the Euphrates to Haran.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

A STUDY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHARACTER

Beginning the Lesson

The story of Jacob extends through twenty-six chapters of the Book of Genesis. His life had six periods. The first is at Beersheba in his father's house, where he is his mother's favorite, and a poor creature at best, tricky and mean. The second is at Bethel, where he is alone on the hillside; it is only one night in duration, yet it is a turning-point in his career, for there he learns to know the nearness of God and the comfort of his protecting care. The third is at Paddan-aram (Mesopotamia) where he is himself tricked, where through not unclouded prosperity he becomes more of a man. The fourth period is at the Brook Jabbok, where he learns to give up all compromise, to choose between self-trust and trust in God, and becomes "a Prince with God." The fifth period is in Canaan, and the sixth and last in Egypt.

Jacob's life is so well known to us all that we need not tarry long with its incidents but can hasten on to its lessons.

The Significance of our First Story

Esau was generous, warm-hearted and forgiving. Jacob was mean and resentful and selfish. Esau was frank and open. Jacob was furtive and deceptive. No doubt Esau was a hero in his community, admired and loved by young and old. Jacob was probably unpopular, effeminate, and contemptible. Any one would have said that Esau would be the one that man would remember gratefully and that Jacob when he died would quickly be forgotten.

But the very reverse has been the case. No one knows what became of Esau. No one took the trouble to record his end. At the end of Jacob's life, he towered over Esau as the mountain towers over the plain. Why? It was because Esau had every good quality except one; Jacob had scarcely any good quality, but he had the one that Esau lacked. Esau lived his life wholly in the present. He knew no other world; he cared for no other. Everything but the material present was unreal to him. Even the future was unreal. He knew it was his right some day to come into his birthright. But all the future was so vague and unreal to him that he sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. Jacob, on the other hand, saw that the things he could taste and touch and see were only a part of the valuable things in life. Jacob had some spiritual capacity, and he made so much of it that he gradually changed an almost contemptible character into one that was heroic. Jacob looked ahead; he looked within; he looked above. Slowly he came to see and hear something that led him on to greater and greater heights.

His achievement gives a hint of the practical value of religion in every one's life. There are hypocrites and failures, as every one knows. Yet it is a fact that the man who nourishes his spiritual nature, who seeks the help of religion, who tries to lay hold of God and to do his will, will grow in grace as he grows in years. He will never cry out, "All is vanity!" but each day life will become more wonderful in his sight; he will see the world grow nobler and sweeter. He may be insignificant, as Jacob was in the beginning. He may attain heights greater than Jacob's before he dies.—The Youth's Companion.

There Were Two Jacobs

Does the same mind which with unseemly cunning plotted against his brother contain the fabric out of which can be woven such a beautiful dream as he had at Bethel? questions Dr. Lynn Harold Hough. "The answer is that this may not be logical, but it is intensely human. How can such goodness and such evil dwell together in the same human mind? The fact remains that a mind capable of heavenly visions is also capable of thoughts unspeakably unworthy. You have to remember the ladder uniting earth and heaven in order to keep from thinking too poorly of Jacob. You have to remember the brother he mistreated in order to keep from thinking too highly of Jacob. The truth is there were two of Jacob as there are of all of us. Sooner or later one of the two would conquer. Then the real and permanent Jacob would emerge."

On the Upper Road

Self-seeker, schemer, liar, cheat was Jacob in his youth; devoid of all sense of honor, filial love and duty; crafty, unscrupulous, greedy, grasping. All this was in his early life. But he possessed many good qualities, and in the later story we see their development. He was a man of indomitable tenacity of purpose, able to pursue his aim year after year until at last he attained it; he had great self-reliance and moral courage; and above all, he was devoted to the covenant God of his fathers, and keenly sensitive to spiritual influences. His tendency, with all his evil qualities, was upward. He became Israel, a prince with God.

There is a beautiful stanza by Dr. W. J. Dawson which reads:

"I'm going by the upper road, for that still holds the sun;
I'm climbing through night's pastures, where starry rivers run;
If you should think to seek me in my old dark abode,
You'll find this writing on the door—'He's on the Upper Road.'"

At the Jabbok Jacob is on the Upper Road. There was much meanness in his early life, and his life at Haran was not unmixed with meanness. But the better elements in his character have been gaining on the baser, and as he is nearing his encounter with Esau, we see him planning adroitly, yet depending humbly upon God's help, and desiring above all things to be reconciled to his brother whom he supplanted. He has not reached the heights, but he is on the Upper Road.

The Question

"Were the whole world as good as you—not an atom better—
Were it just as pure and true,
Just as pure and true as you;
Just as strong in faith and works;
Just as free from crafty quirks;
All extortion, all deceit;
Schemes its neighbor to defeat;
Schemes its neighbor to defraud;
Schemes some culprit to applaud—
Would this world be better?

"If this whole world followed you—followed to the letter—
Would it be a nobler world,
All deceit and falsehood hurled
From it altogether;
Malice, selfishness, and lust
Banished from beneath the crust
Covering human hearts from view—
Tell me, if it followed you,
Would the world be better?"

The Test of Integrity

The acid test of a socially-minded farmer is whether or not he is willing to sacrifice a tuberculous cow in his dairy herd. This is especially true because a cow may be to all appearances hale and hearty and may be a generous giver of milk high in butter-fat, and yet make a response to the tuberculin test which shows that her milk is a peril to the community. In fact, it seems to be almost the routine thing that it is the farmer's "best cow" on which the expert hangs his tag. And the farmer who is no more than just an average farmer normally reacts by declaring that the experts, not being practical farmers, know nothing about cows or milk or the art of earning an honest living on a dairy farm, and by rising in rebellion against pure milk campaigns and tuberculin tests as the work of meddlesome theorists. This is very natural, because it costs the farmer good money to lose a cow. The degree of his co-operation in an enterprise in which the public welfare is balanced against his own financial interests is a fair index of his social-mindedness.

It would be interesting to know in this case, as in any other where social attitudes and private profit are concerned, what influence religion has. Fortunately, we do now know something about it, thanks to a piece of research carried on by Mr. Carl Hutchinson, research associate in social ethics in Chicago theological seminary. After a considerable inquiry among Illinois farmers, the investigator found that farmers who are church members are more friendly to pure milk campaigns, more willing

to have their herds tested, quicker to place the general welfare before their private interests, than the average in their communities. This co-ordination between church membership and the sense of social responsibility ought to be no surprise to anyone, but probably it will be. It is only what should be expected if the church has succeeded to even the slightest degree in delivering its Master's message.—The Christian Century.

Subjects for Bible Class Discussion

1. The mixed elements in all human nature.

2. Does business success come to more men who are audacious, unscrupulous and cunning, or to more men of integrity and uncorruptibility?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What was the divine purpose in the migration of Jacob and his family into Egypt? 2. How many years elapsed between the time of Jacob and of Moses? 3. In our text what is meant by "the back of the wilderness"? 4. How do you explain the words, "God called to him out of the midst of the bush"? 5. Why was the place "holy ground"? 6. How was Moses fitted for the task of delivering the Israelites from bondage? 7. Give an estimate of Moses' character and ability.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE HONEST

Beginning the Lesson

Suppose someone has promised your brother a trip to the seashore, and you envy him the bright prospect. Suppose you plan to get that chance away from him, and one hot day when you know he is coming home tired and thirsty, you have a dish of ice cream ready, and say to him, "You can have this ice cream if you will let me go to the shore in your stead." Would that be wrong in you? It would be wrong in you to tempt him to make so foolish an exchange, and it would be wrong in him to let his appetite rob him of something infinitely better. The story of Jacob and Esau shows in the same way how envy and greed lead to contemptible actions.

In The New Portfolio, Oliver Wendell Holmes refers to Dr. Samuel Johnson as "my dear and honored contemporary, who died a hundred years ago this day." Jacob who died many, many centuries ago, is our contemporary in the sense in which our poet uses the word. In his faults and in his virtues he is like ourselves. We don't like to admit it, for we view his ugly deeds with the utmost scorn, but back of his deeds was his greed, his desire to get the better of others through whatever means, and can we say that the boys and girls of this generation are wholly unlike him in this respect?

The Tangled Web

The story of how Jacob deceived his father Isaac (Genesis 27) shows what a lot of trouble it takes to deceive, how much time and planning are necessary. And it shows what a lot of lying it involves. It was not so easy to cheat his blind father after all. He had to let his father feel him and to tell lie after lie to carry out his deception. That is the trouble with deceit, you can never foresee how many lies you will have to tell to bolster up your pretense, and you can never know when the matter is done with, for it has a way of coming up again and again and involving you in still further lying.

"Oh, what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practice to deceive!"

The story shows, too, how heavily one often has to pay for deceit, even though by it one wins out at first. Jacob won his brother's hatred, and had to flee from home to save his life. He was exiled from home, became a stranger in a strange land, where he had many troubles and learned of a surety that whatsoever we sow that shall we also reap.

How a Boy Learned What Honesty Is

A school boy had in his keeping the money which had been raised for a celebration. As he was skirting a pond a playful Newfoundland dog jumped for a handkerchief in which the money was tied, seized it out of the boy's hand and swam out into the pond with it. Then the knot in the handkerchief untied and the money sank.

It was a sober lad who met the other boys and told them what had happened. "Can't you make up a more likely story than that?" one of the boys sneered.

"For an instant I was thunderstruck, and then I was boiling with wrath" (as the boy, now a grown man tells the long story in The Youth's Companion.) "Tom was the biggest boy in school, but I meant to make him eat his words, or know the reason why. 'You take that back!' I said. 'Don't you dare to tell me I lie.'

"But Tom didn't eat his words. 'O pshaw!' he said, 'just as if you couldn't lie! You've lied time and again. You lied to the teacher yesterday; and what's to hinder your lying today?'

"Well, at that, every mite of struggle seemed to go out of my arms. I just backed away and went home. It wasn't the sight of Tom's fists that drove me. It was what he had said. The trouble was, 'twas true. I had only done as a good many others did in school, and I hadn't really meant much harm. When I told a fib, it was as often to shield others as myself. In regard to anything important that happened out of school, I intended to tell the truth, and expected to be believed.

"As it happened, the dog's owner had seen the incident and afterwards bore me out in my story. But I insisted on making up that money out of my own pocket, and to do it I had to sell my gun. I had learned a lesson; and I determined that in the future I'd try to make my word good enough to stand alone."

To be called a liar is considered, the world over, about the worst of insults. But —how is a fellow going to have the face to resent it, if he knows down in his heart that it is true?

A Fine Edge of Character Was Lacking

In a large public school where the pupils took their lunch in the school restaurant, a test of their honesty was made at the request of the professor of psychology. Each of the six hundred boys was given one noon five cents too much in change. Only three boys came and gave back the nickel. Some time later he caused them all to be given five cents too little, and all but sixteen of the six hundred came back to have the mistake corrected.

What Does it Mean to Be Honest?

Here is an explanation of honesty by William De Witt Hyde: "To be honest means that you refuse to be partner to a trade or transaction in which you would not willingly accept its consequences to all parties, provided you were in their place. Any transaction that involves effects on another which we would not willingly, under the circumstances, accept for ourselves, is fraud and robbery."

In the light of this, how must you characterize Jacob's transaction with Esau? How, the following incident, told by Mark Twain?

A lady in the far south, after the war, wrote to a neighbor of Twain's, telling him that among the few possessions left to her was a copy of the Eliot Bible, which she would be glad to sell for one hundred dollars. He wrote back that he believed the book worth one thousand dollars if it were a perfect copy. The Bible was sent to him, he obtained a thousand dollars for it in London, and sent her the entire amount.

Some one recalls in connection with this story of Mark Twain's another incident of the opposite sort. A widowed descendant of Audubon, in desperate need, offered a perfect copy of Audubon's Birds to another American scholar for the same price—one hundred dollars. The value of the book in the collecting market was equal to that of the Eliot Bible—a thousand dollars. The scholar knew this. He bought the book for the one hundred dollars, sold it for a thousand, and plumed himself on his business sagacity. What do you think of this man?

Sentence Sermons

I thank God that he has given me strength enough to avoid all tricks.—Gordon.

"Beautiful faces are those that wear—
It matters little if dark or fair
Whole-souled honesty printed there."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What chapters of the Bible tell about the oppression of the children of Israel in Egypt? 2. How long did Moses live in Egypt? 3. Why did he leave Egypt? 4. What did Moses give up when he cast his lot in with his brethren? 5. Where did he go? 6. Where was Midian? 7. Horeb? 8. What is meant by "a land flowing with milk and honey"? 9. What is meant by "doing the impossible"?

MOSES (A Courageous Leader)

GOLDEN TEXT: By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Hebrews 11.27

LESSON Exodus 1.8-14; 2.1-22; 3.1-14; 11.1-10; 32.30-35; Deuteronomy 34.1-8; Hebrews 11.23-29
DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 90.12-17

EXODUS 3.1 Now Moses was keeping the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the back of the wilderness, and came to the mountain of God, unto Horeb. 2 And the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. 3 And Moses said, I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. 4 And when Jehovah saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. 5 And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. 6 Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. 7 And Jehovah said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; 8 and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. 9 And now, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: moreover I have seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. 10 Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt. 11 And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? 12 And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be the token unto thee, that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE CALL OF MOSES, verses 1-10. The summons to become the leader of his people, deliver them from oppression in Egypt and bring them forth on their way to the Promised Land, came to Moses as, in his care of the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, he wandered from the back of the wilderness (that is, the west; the east is always the front) to Horeb, the mountain of God. There before the bush that burned and yet was not consumed, Moses heard God speaking to him. Just as the account of the temptation of Christ in the wilderness must have come from Christ himself, and is his pictorial way of portraying his inner experience, so the account of the call of Moses in the wilderness must have been told by Moses himself, and may have been given by him in this pictorial way. The burning bush may be an outward representation of an inward experience—the flame of enthusiasm for a great cause. Be that as it may, it is assuredly true that Moses had the power to see the divine origin of the glowing beauty of the bush: he was able to see God in the things of everyday life.

"Moses stood before an ordinary bush, and he became aware of God; Jeremiah stood before a budding almond tree while all around was dead, and he became aware of God; Wordsworth stood before a little primrose on a rock, and it became to him the court of the Deity" (J. H. Jowett).

"Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes (sandals) from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Recall Jacob's sense of God's presence at Bethel and the holiness of the place.

> "Earth's crowned with heaven, and every common bush afire with God;
> But only he who sees, takes off his shoes;
> The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries" (Mrs. Browning).

"I have seen. . . . I have heard. . . . I know." Thus in a way which can be understood the thought is expressed that God is compassionate. "I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land into a good land and a large, into a land flowing with milk and honey" (a proverbial phrase for abundance). Milk and honey were the best products of a land abounding in pastures and flowers.

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MOSES

(From the Photo Play "The Ten Commandments")

With a new flash of insight Moses knew that God was calling him to a stupendous task, that it was God's will that he should return to Egypt and accomplish the deliverance of the enslaved Israelites. All this is expressed in the words of verses 7-9.

No theophany, no revelation, is ever sent merely for one's own benefit; it is always for the sake of some service one may render.

II. MOSES PLEADS HIS UNFITNESS FOR THE TASK AND RECEIVES THE ASSURANCE OF HELP, verses 11, 12. Is he the man for so colossal an undertaking? He greatly doubts it. "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" he questions. See Num. 12.3 and compare Jeremiah's words in Jer. 1.4-8. What a contrast is there between Moses slaying the Egyptian and Moses at the burning bush! Then, rashly self-confident, he was ready to take the whole matter into his own hands; now, more than prudently self-distrustful, he is overpowered by the sense of his unfitness for the task and wishes to be excused from it. He knows the might of Egypt, the supineness of Israel, his own weakness: the difficulties seem insurmountable.

So Luther shrank from his call. "No, no, sir," he said to the superior who urged him to preach; "it is not a little thing to speak before men in the place of God." So a physician now famous shrank from the appointment offered him at the close of his medical career. "You feel yourself unfit for it?" repeated the surgeon; "then you are just the man for it." It has been well said that men who can do such work as the Jeremiahs, Luthers, Cromwells, can do, are never forward to begin it.

"Certainly I will be with thee": not unfit since God will be with me, was the assurance that came to Moses. It recalls to our mind our last lesson in Matthew's Gospel, when Christ said to his sorrowing disciples, "Lo, I am with you always."

Moses' fear that the people will not know he is God's agent is met by the assurance of the success of his mission. "This shall be the token unto thee, that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain." In like manner the token, or sign, given to the shepherds, Luke, 2.12, was future. "Ye *shall find* the babe." To believe that the children of Israel should escape from Egypt and worship God on that very mountain required great faith.

"Move to the fore!
Say not another is fitter than thou—
Shame to the manhood that sits on thy brow!
Own thyself equal to all that man may,
Cease thine evading; God needs thee today,
Move to the fore!" (James Buckham)

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Out of the midst of the bush, verse 2. This was the shittim, or acacia tree, the thorn-bush of the desert which spreads out its tangled branches, thick-set with white thorns, over the rocky ground.—Dean Stanley.

A Shittim Tree

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Between Jacob and Moses

Abraham had been assured that God would make of his descendants a great nation, great in the special sense of being a great blessing. The prospect of such greatness still seemed remote in the time of Joseph, Jacob's son, whose story is told in Genesis 37.39-50. A severe famine in Canaan led Jacob and his eleven sons to go down into Egypt and settle there, as arranged by Joseph then prime minister of Egypt.

Four centuries pass. The Book of Exodus begins with the oppression of the Israelites in Egypt. Beginning their life in Egypt as subjects of a Pharaoh who welcomed their coming, the Israelites had prospered for a time, increasing rapidly in numbers and acquiring wealth and power. Then came a change. The Hyksos (or shepherd kings, one of whom is thought to have been the Pharaoh of Joseph's day) were foreign invaders who had conquered Egypt. The native Egyptians finally rose in rebellion, drove them out of the land, and put their own kings upon the throne. Another revolution brought in the Rameses dynasty. The first four great names of this dynasty are Rameses I, Seti I, Rameses II and Merneptah. These rulers "knew not Joseph," cared not that the Israelites were kin of the great viceroy who had saved his people from death by famine. Probably the enslavement of the Israelites began under the first two of these Pharaohs. The third, Rameses II, is thought to have been the Pharaoh of the Oppression. He was a great builder of cities and temples, and he made his Hebrew slaves work hard in the brick fields. His son Merneptah is believed to have been the Pharaoh who ordered the death of all the male Hebrew children so as to exterminate the race.

How a Hebrew mother outwitted the king's officers and saved her babe is one of the best known stories of the Bible. Pharaoh's daughter adopted the babe and named him Moses. For forty years Moses lived as a prince of the royal house.

Moses Leaves Egypt for Midian

When Moses was grown his heart was with his own people; he could not live contentedly at court, knowing that they were suffering under the hands of taskmasters. He could do nothing for them as an Egyptian, he realized; and must become one of them. One day, when he was forty years old, he saw an Egyptian strike an Israelite. He killed the Egyptian, and then fled for his life to Midian. "This ancient labor leader," as Dr. Charles R. Brown points out, "began his work in the wrong mood and with the wrong methods. He undertook the social deliverance of his people by a policy of personal violence. He had yet to discover that the right road out of industrial bondage must lead inevitably along the foot of Mount Sinai."

There in Midian through long years he meditated upon the problem of his people, and communed with God till he was ready to become their leader.

The Book of Exodus

The word *Exodus* is Latin and means *Departure*. It tells of the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt, and the outstanding figure in the book is Moses, the deliverer of his people. It closes with the erection of the tabernacle in the second year of the Exodus.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

In his flight from Egypt to Midian, Moses probably followed the highway which runs from the present Isthmus of Suez to the eastern arm of the Red Sea, where was Midian. The Midianites were descendants of Midian, the son of Abraham and Keturah.

The triangular peninsula of Sinai is part of the great Arabian peninsula which extends between the Mediterranean Sea on the north and the two arms of the Red Sea on the southeast and southwest. It has two natural divisions; the apex with its irregular mountain masses, and the northern part with its deserts and oases.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

How modern are these excuses made by Moses! Many a man and woman when called to be a teacher in a Church-school has made them all! He has an honest feeling of unfitness, he has a low estimate of his qualifications as a teacher; he fears he will not succeed; he pleads his ignorance of the name of God, of religious knowledge; he has his own intellectual troubles, and needs leading himself; his words will fall on stony ground, for the pupils will not hearken unto him; he has no gift of speech.

Let all hesitating men and women who have been called to teach consider the need, as did Moses, and then face the task as did he. Let them feel assured that

God will enable them as he enabled Moses, if they will give themselves wholeheartedly to the work.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

LEADER, LIBERATOR AND LAWGIVER

Beginning the Lesson

Forty years Moses spent in Egypt, a period which ended in storm and stress; yet forty years he spent in the wilderness, in solitude and meditation. The years in Midian were years of training; he was becoming acquainted with himself and learning humility and self-control; he was becoming acquainted with the whole situation and was growing capable of mastering it because he had been mastered by it; and above all else, he was becoming acquainted with God and his purposes for him. But with all this insight the hasty man had become hesitant; he had lost his bravery and enthusiasm and self-confidence: he needed to be restored to faith and action and energy, to be inspirited with the consciousness that back of his effort was God's power. This came to him in the "vision of the burning bush."

"The biography of great men is not confined to public events. It relates the incidents which are private, and describes the experiences which are spiritual and account for spiritual results." Thus it is with Moses: the experience which is described in our printed text was spiritual and accounts for the marvelous results in the life of this great leader, liberator, and lawgiver.

He met God at Horeb. "Only in the sacredness of inward silence does the soul truly meet the secret, living God. The strength of resolve, which afterwards shapes life, and mixes itself with action, is the fruit of those sacred, solitary moments. There is a divine depth in silence. We meet God alone."

How Moses Faced his Great Opportunity for Leadership

Give me men to match my mountains
Give me men to match my plains;
Men with empires in their purpose,
Men with eras in their brains.

Thus Walter Foss voices the great need of the modern world. And the need would be met if a few men and women would put themselves in training as did Moses in the long ago.

How was Moses prepared for a task that might well have staggered any man?

For many years Moses' thoughts had dwelt upon his people's oppression in Egypt. Into his mind God had put his sublime idea of redeeming them from their bondage, of organizing them, and welding them into a nation, instructing them in law and in religion. They were God's chosen people, and he was God's chosen instrument. This he believed, but the enormity of the task appalled him. He hid his face, afraid to look squarely at the fact. He wrestled with himself, gave all manner of excuses for not assuming the responsibility for the gigantic work. During all these years he had meditated, too, upon God and his ways. He had held communion with God. And God always meets with those who strive to meet with him. God met with Moses at the burning bush. In that vision of God and his will he gained the victory over himself, and resolved to struggle no longer against God's purpose for him. He listened to God's call and obeyed the summons.

The Greatness of Moses as Leader

It was Moses who made the children of Israel willing to leave Egypt. It was he who crossed the Red Sea; the people only followed. It was he who bore with them and taught them throughout the wilderness life; they were but a spiritless tribe, who had been born and had lived as slaves, and who desired nothing better than enjoyment of the slaves' portion from the flesh-pots, the eating of "bread to their fill." Greater than the freeing of the slaves from bondage was Moses' achievement of making of their children a nation capable, under God, of conquering Canaan, and, above all else, of knowing God and his laws. He created Israel, the Chosen People of God. How tireless the energy, how boundless the patience, how abiding the faith, of this great leader!

"If greatness," says Harris Weinstock, "is to be measured by its influence on the life of humanity, by its power for good on the family of mankind, what man in all antiquity can compare with the greatness of him who at the same time was prophet and priest, judge and ruler; who taught not only by precept but also by

example, and of whom the Bible truly says: 'And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses whom the Lord knew face to face.'"

It is from Moses that we find the first clear, positive statement of the principles which, during all their more modern history, Europe and America have been trying to apply. The rights of God; the rights of man; the relationship of God to man and of man to God; the relationship of men to each other; all these have been thought out by him and expressed with a clarity which gives us perhaps our first great human document. This document remains, too, the world's masterpiece in conciseness.

Nowhere do we find anything to equal it for the rare merit of much-in-little. Nowhere do we find sequence of thought graded in a way to cover so much ground. All codes of law can be found here in epitome with the marvelous achievement that, in principle at least, nothing is left out.

The Ten Commandments did not, even in the time of Moses, represent all law; they stood for the principle of law. They were headings, but headings that covered all the points. Except as headings they did not offer a rule of conduct to the individual; they furnished ground on which rules of conduct could be built up. To the building up of rules of conduct, rules which worked out in detail what the Decalogue embodied in principle, Moses and the elders of the people immediately set themselves. The heroic accomplishment was the fixing of a basis for individual and collective action which could never be outgrown.

Not the least of the traits in this majestic character is the confidence with which he offers the Charter of the Rights of God and Man first to a rabble of tribes, and through them to a rabble of a world. He must have seen how far it was beyond them, how far it would remain for thousands of years to come. Fifty centuries after his time it is still beyond us, so much beyond us that we have dropped into a habit of thinking that we are beyond it. Perhaps he could foresee, too, that we should learn it parrot-like, by rote, teach it parrot-like to our children, recite it lifelessly in churches, and let the mighty spirit it enshrines lie dead. Nevertheless he offers it, fearlessly, sublimely.

He probably knew that one day it would win. Entering into phase after phase of the civilization it inspired, it would survive them all, give coherence to them all, and be to them all both impulse and objective. No other gods than God! It is all in that. No other point from which to start; no other source from which to draw; no other goal to make for. It would be long before the civilization he founded would reach that state, but having once set out to look for it, it would never turn back from the quest.—Condensed from an article in Good Housekeeping, by Basil King.

Be Strong!

Be strong!
We are not here to play, to dream, to drift,
We have hard work to do and loads to lift,
Shun not the struggle, face it, 'tis God's gift.
Be strong!—M. D. Babcock.

Subjects for Bible Class Discussion

1. We do nothing well till we learn our worth; nothing best till we forget it.—James Martineau.

2. The training of a labor leader. See pages 103-108 of Charles Reynolds Brown's Story Book of the Early Hebrews.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What was woman's position in Old Testament times? 2. Who was the first woman whose aspirations for national leadership are recorded in the Bible? (Num. 12.1-15) 3. What did Deborah mean by her words in verse nine? 4. What adjectives would apply to Deborah? 5. What part should woman have in national affairs? 6. What women have become noted for their work in community and national life? 7. Have you any responsibility for your community or nation?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

DARING THE IMPOSSIBLE

Beginning the Lesson

Moses in Midian was a shepherd. Is this, you ask in surprise, a fitting occupation

for a man who as a babe was saved from death by God in so strange a way, who became a prince and was brought up in a palace and highly educated? Had God no greater use for such a man? Ordinary men can be shepherds, but ordinary men cannot accomplish what a man like Moses was to accomplish. Moses himself during those long years spent with his sheep must often have wondered what his life amounted to, and why he was there.

But those years were not spent in vain: during that time he was being made fit to be a leader of God's people. The Jews have a saying that God never exalts a man till he has first tried him in small things. In the wilderness Moses was exercising virtues and talents needed for leadership. He was watchful, cautious, brave, enduring, self-reliant, tender and skilful.

There is a beautiful legend told by the Jews that while Moses was tending his father-in-law's flocks a lambkin strayed from the fold. He went in search of it. At length he came to a stream, where he discovered the missing lamb quenching its thirst. Full of compassion for its mute helplessness, and half blaming himself for not having anticipated its wants, he exclaimed: "Had I known that thou wast thirsty, thou shouldest not have had so far to go. I fear thy long, heated journey hath tired thee." And tenderly he caught the little creature and carried it back to the fold. Then said God: "If thou art so tender toward a dumb animal which cannot make its wants known, surely thou wilt prove a merciful leader of my flock."

One day Moses went with his flocks to the southern part of the Peninsula of Sinai: where is that peninsula? There he learned that God was calling him to a great task: what was it? How did he respond? (Follow with Explanations and Comments.)

His Eyes Were Opened

A young man was walking along a country road and a farmer driving by stopped to give him a ride. The young man showed the farmer some views he had taken with his kodak. One of them especially charmed the farmer, and he asked where it had been taken. "In this neighborhood," the artist replied, "but I cannot tell you just where for I am not familiar with these roads." Soon the farmer turned into his gateway, remarking, "Well, I'll have to let you off here." Then he noticed the surprised gaze of his companion and enquired the cause. "Why, this is the very gate I showed you," the younger man returned with a smile, as he took out the picture the old man had so greatly admired. "Well, well," slowly said the latter, "to think I never saw it before!"

Moses had passed many a thorn bush in his wanderings with his flock in Midian, but had not seen God therein. There came a time when his eyes were opened and he was ready for the vision. His seeing God was the climax of a long seeking after God.

Doing the Impossible

Moses accepted the stupendous task that God willed him to accomplish, and he did accomplish it. When once he began his mission there was no faltering, no turning back. Great were the difficulties and great was his patience in leading a perverse and fickle people out from Egypt and welding them into a nation. He had to be general and prophet and teacher and legislator and physician and priest. But he was God's agent in working God's will, and God was with him in the undertaking.

"Can you do it?" a Korean was asked concerning certain church work. "We ask such questions as 'Can you do it?' about men's work, but not about God's work," he quickly answered.

"I can," said Moses, and the Pharaoh yielded and liberty was won. "I can," said Lincoln, and the slaves were freed. "I can," said Lindbergh, and the distance between New York and France was conquered by air.

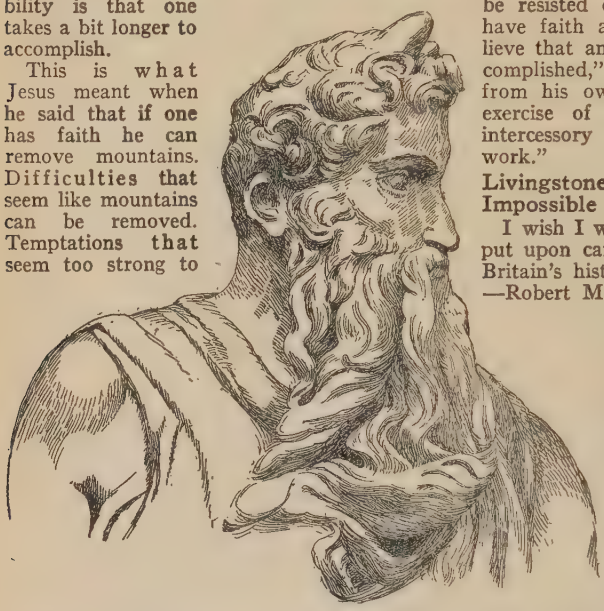
When Napoleon talked of going into Italy, men said to him: "You can't get there. If you knew what the Alps are you wouldn't think of it. You can't get your ammunition wagons over the Alps." Then, so it is said, Napoleon waved his hand toward the mountains, and said, "There shall be no Alps!" And then that wonderful pass was made which did away with the difficulties of the Alps.

In a scientific institution in Australia there hangs suspended from the roof an immense cylinder. At the end of a piece of string there dangles in front of the cylinder a tiny cork. Can that cork, which weighs one ounce, move the great

steel cylinder? Impossible, one would say. And yet a man who believes it can, throws the cork against the side of the huge object. It bounds back. For fifteen minutes the action is repeated and nothing happens. Twenty minutes pass, and the cylinder is seen to tremble a trifle. The feeble blows of the cork are kept up, and at the end of twenty-five minutes the giant cylinder is swinging violently backwards and forwards. The ounce of cork did it.

Some one has said that the only difference between a difficulty and an impossibility is that one takes a bit longer to accomplish.

This is what Jesus meant when he said that if one has faith he can remove mountains. Difficulties that seem like mountains can be removed. Temptations that seem too strong to be resisted can be overcome if we have faith and persistence. "I believe that any great task can be accomplished," said one who knew from his own experiences, "by the exercise of boundless faith, much intercessory prayer, and ceaseless work."



Head of Moses. From the statue by Michael Angelo in the Church of St. Pietro in Vinculo, Rome.

Livingstone Dared to Do the Impossible

I wish I were a painter. I would put upon canvas a picture in Great Britain's history back in the thirties —Robert Moffat facing David Livingstone. Just two characters: Livingstone, trained for service, waiting his marching orders; and Moffat, fresh from Africa, seeking help in the redemption of the Dark Continent. History caught little of what was said that day, but enough to tell us that, under God, Moffat spoke twenty words which gave to Livingstone his life's vision and turned him from China to Africa.

What were the historic words spoken by Moffat? He said: "I have sometimes seen, in the morning sun, the smoke of a thousand villages where no missionary has ever been." That was enough! It was the call from an African Macedonia to a nineteenth century St. Paul. In that brief sentence Livingstone had revealed to him his opportunity. From that moment his life's work was the task of carrying the gospel of Jesus Christ to the "thousand villages."—Joseph Clark, in The Smoke of a Thousand Villages.

We Are Able

When President Hoover, "that most extraordinary Yankee," as they called him during the Great War, found that Belgium was on the verge of starvation he went to a British official and said that tons of food must be sent there.

"It simply can't be done!" exclaimed the amazed official. "In the first place, we would not allow you to buy so much food at a time like this. In the second place, if you did buy the food, we would not allow you to take it out of the country. You could get no ships to carry it."

"I have bought the food," Mr. Hoover returned. "I have secured the ships, and they are ready to sail. All I ask is clearance papers."

And the ships sailed.

Mr. Hoover might be the man that Edgar A. Guest had in mind when he wrote these stanzas:

Somebody said that it couldn't be done;
But he with a chuckle replied,
That "Maybe it couldn't," but he would be one
Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.

So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin
On his face. If he worried he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done—and he did it.

Believe that You Can

Probably the greatest obstacle to a girl's success in business is the belief that her own powers are limited and that her ability will never be greater than it is at the present time. She forgets that every time she harbors doubt or acknowledges a lack of ability that she is weakening her own faith in herself and inviting defeat.

The world takes us at our own valuation. It believes in us if we believe in ourselves. For that reason the girl who believes she can do the thing she attempts, who dares to step forth and act with confidence, independence and determination, is certain to outstrip her timid, faint-hearted and vacillating sister. By her very air of confidence she not only inspires others with a belief in her ability but adds to her faith in herself.

We always find that the girl who is accomplishing things is the girl who lays out a definite plan of action for each day, carefully directs her own thoughts, and does not complain because obstacles cross her path. No matter how much harder her work proves than she anticipated or what unforeseen difficulties arise, she will not admit, even to herself, that there is a possibility of failure. If she finds her present environment unpleasant, she stoutly denies the power of unfavorable conditions to keep her down, declares she is the master, not the slave, of circumstances, and by her self-confidence and faith increases her own strength and power and at the same time imparts to others faith in her ability to obtain results. She may encounter many difficulties and disappointments, but she will turn them, as the oyster does the sand that annoys it, into a pearl.—Mary Caldwell Hamilton.

The Two Wills

History is full of examples of what has been accomplished by sheer force of will power. "People do not lack strength, they lack will," said Victor Hugo. "Nothing is impossible to the man who can will," said Mirabeau. "I trample on impossibility," said Pitt. "You can do whatsoever you earnestly undertake," was Stonewall Jackson's belief.

There is much truth in these words: seemingly impossible things have been done over and over again by those who refused to become discouraged and willed to accomplish them. Yet will power cannot accomplish everything. Something besides is necessary. It is the will of God. Emerson's beautiful words:

"So night is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man,
When duty whispers low, 'Thou must,'
The youth replies, 'I can,' "

are grandly true when the duty is of God's appointing.

Sentence Sermons

Beware of despairing about yourself; you are commanded to put your trust in God and not in yourself.—St. Augustine.

Have it as a law to be always doing great works; that is, works that are great to you.—Horace Bushnell.

Who does the utmost that he can
Will whyles do mair.—Burns.

What you can do, or dream you can, begin it;
Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.—Goethe.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Describe the Plain of Esdraelon. 2. Compare Barak's words in verse eight with Moses' words in Exodus 33.15. 3. To whom did Deborah ascribe her victory, Judges 5.20? 4. What other women have been renowned in battle? 5. What part did women take in the Great War? 6. Mention some notable women patriots.

DEBORAH (A Leader in a National Emergency)

(May be Used with Temperance Applications)

GOLDEN TEXT: Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not. Isaiah 35.4

LESSON Judges 4.1-15 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 68.4-11

JUDGES 4.1 And the children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, when Ehud was dead. 2 And Jehovah sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles. 3 And the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.

4 Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. 5 And she dwelt under the palm-tree of Deborah between Ramah and Beth-el in the hill-country of Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. 6 And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-naphtali, and said unto him, Hath not Jehovah, the God of Israel, commanded, *saying*, Go and draw unto mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun? 7 And I will draw unto thee, to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thy hand. 8 And Barak said unto her. If thou wilt go with me, then I will go; but if thou wilt not go with me, I will not go. 9 And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding, the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honor; for Jehovah will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh. 10 And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali together to Kedesh; and there went up ten thousand men at his feet: and Deborah went up with him.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE OPPRESSION AT THE HANDS OF JABIN, verses 1-3. When Ehud was dead (see The Historical Background) the Israelites were oppressed by the Philistines, and for fear of them travelers left the highways for the byways. With only his ox-goad as a weapon, probably at the head of many other peasants similarly armed, Shamgar killed six hundred Philistines. Then came a crisis. Jabin, king of the Northern Confederacy of the Canaanites, through Sisera, his commander-in-chief, had for twenty years held a military depostism over the northern districts of Canaan. The children of Israel cried unto Jehovah for help, for Jabin had nine hundred chariots, and they lived on the hills and had none.

"When the Spanish Armada set sail for England, its object was the destruction of England's liberties and the uprooting of England's religion. It was the mightiest fleet the world had ever seen when it sailed proudly out of the harbors of Spain. There were a hundred and thirty mighty vessels in it, while to oppose it England could collect only eighty vessels—scarcely thirty of which were ships of the line. The disparity was absurd. Indeed, so conscious were the Spaniards of their superior strength that they called their fleet in advance 'the Invincible Armada.' Everyone knows that it was not Howard and Drake who finally destroyed the Armada. When Howard and Drake fell back for lack of ammunition, Nature seemed to take up their work. Wind and sea took up the work of destruction. On many a rocky island in Scotland, on many a cape on the west of Ireland those great galleons of Spain went crashing to their doom. Only fifty-four battered vessels made their way back. English folk verily believed Nature had helped them in their fight. *'Deus flavit,'* so ran the inscription on the medal which Elizabeth struck to commemorate the mighty deliverance, *'et dissipati sunt'*—'God blew upon them, and they were scattered'" (J. D. Jones).

II. DEBORAH SUMMONS BARAK TO THE DEFENSE, verses 4-7. The name Deborah means "Bee," and Matthew Henry, that ancient interpreter of the Bible, sees in Deborah the judge the fulfilment of her name by her industry, sagacity, and great usefulness to the public, her sweetness to her friends and sharpness to her enemies. She was a prophetess and the wife of Lapidoth. To quote Matthew Henry again: "The termination not being commonly found in the name of a man, some make this the name of a place: she was 'a woman of Lapidoth.' Others take it appellatively, Lapidoth signifying *lamps*. The rabbis say she had employed herself in mak-

Edwin Austin Abbey, R.A.

THEN SANG DEBORAH

Judges 5.1.

ing wicks for lamps of the tabernacle; and, having stooped to that mean office for God, she was afterwards thus preferred. Or she was a woman of illumination, one that was extraordinarily knowing and wise." Between Ramah and Bethel, in the hill-country of Ephraim (see The Geographical Background) she was wont to sit under a palm-tree as judge, perhaps not so often to settle disputes between men as to declare what was the judgment of God in national affairs, and the tree was therefore called the palm-tree of Deborah. "On the coins of the Roman Empire, Judea is represented as a woman seated under a palm-tree, captive and weeping. It is the contrast of that figure which will best place before us the character and calling of Deborah. It is the same Judean palm, under whose shadow she sits, but not with downcast eyes, and folded hands and extinguished hopes, but with all the fire of faith and energy, eager for the battle, confident of victory" (Dean Stanley).

Coin Representing the Capture of Jerusalem

Barak, the son of Ahinoam, Deborah summoned with the words, "Hath not Jehovah, the God of Israel, commanded"? Recall Joan of Arc's similar faith in the commands of God. The command Deborah gave Barak was to go to Mount Tabor with ten thousand men of the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun, the tribes most interested in overpowering their oppressors because their territory bordered the Plain of Esdraelon. Deborah is speaking in the name of God, and declares that he will lead Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, and all the host with him to the River Kishon, and there God will give Barak the victory over the enemy.

III. BARAK REQUIRES DEBORAH'S AID, verses 8, 9. Barak was not brave enough to start forth alone, and refused to go unless Deborah would go with him. Deborah consented, but added that he would not have the honor of the result, for Jehovah would sell Sisera into the hands of a woman. Sisera was killed by Jael, a woman (verses 17-22), but Deborah's words seem rather to apply to herself, that to her, rather than to Borak, would be given the credit for the victory.

IV. THE RESULT, verses 11-16. Barak and Deborah, with the men from the two chosen tribes following them, went to Mount Tabor. The flat summit of this rounded hill or its sloping side was an excellent camping ground, whence they could observe the movement of the enemy and charge down upon them in the plain below. Josephus says that when Barak saw Sisera's army drawn up and attempting to surround the hill, his heart quite failed him and he determined to retire to a place of greater safety; but Deborah animated him to make a descent upon Sisera, assuring him that this was the day marked out in the divine counsels for Sisera's defeat.

Harosheth of the Gentiles, from which Sisera advanced, is on the pass leading from the plain by the Mediterranean into the Plain of Esdraelon. His chariots could be seen advancing through the plain. How could the Israelites, armed only with rude weapons, contend against warriors in their chariots to whose axle-trees scythes were fastened with which to mow them down? But they did not fight alone. "They fought from heaven, the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." Torrents of rain poured from heaven, the plain became a mud bed, the Kishon, dry when they started, became a flood. "Is not Jehovah gone out before them?" Deborah had cried to the hesitating Borak: she recognized in the brewing storm the help of Jehovah, and afterwards she sang, "The Lord came down for me against the mighty."

> "Then did the horsehoofs stamp
> By reason of the prancings, the prancing of their strong ones;
> The River Kishon swept them away,
> That ancient river, the River Kishon."

Sisera left his chariot and fled on foot to Kedesh, while Barak pursued the charioteers and overcame them.

"'The stars in their courses fought against Sisera.' This sets forth in poetic form a sure and abiding truth. Let me state the principle which it involves in this way—the very constitution of the universe, the laws of Nature are against the wrong-doer and on the side of the man who does right. Sisera was to these early Israelites the personification of oppression and tyranny. Nature was against this evil man. And what Deborah here says of Sisera is true of every evil man, of every evil interest, of every evil power—of all wickedness and wrong—the stars in their courses are fighting against them; the trend and constitution of things are working steadily and irresistibly for their defeat and overthrow. The universe is so made that it is against all wrong, and on the side of right" (J. D. Jones).

V. THE DEATH OF SISERA, verses 17-22. Jael killed Sisera by driving a tent-pin into his head as he slept. Deborah gloated over his death:

"At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay;
At her feet he bowed, he fell:
Where he bowed, there he fell down dead."

Chapter V is the poetic account, as Chapter IV is the prose account, of the defeat of the Philistines under Deborah and Barak.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Now Deborah, a prophetess, judged Israel at that time, verse 4. Before this, Miriam had aspired to rule; now Deborah is actually the ruler. Many changes occurred in the position of woman during the centuries covered by the Bible. Dr. Ismar J. Peritz thus summarizes them:

"There are traces of the existence in ancient Israel of the matriarchate, when the woman is the head of the family, and descent is reckoned by her. There are traces of the custom of marriage by capture; of marriage by purchase, with all the attendant consequences of woman's subject condition. Among the priestly class and in ritual legislation woman's position is inferior. She not only cannot be a priestess, but she is considered ceremonially defiling. This culminates eventually in Judaism in the entire exclusion of woman from worship; and the Talmudic Jew thanks his Creator in his every morning's prayer that he has not made him a woman. But among the prophets woman is more than equal of man, appearing as leader side by side with him in home, church, and state; and in the teachings of Jesus she comes fully to her own."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

From Moses to the Settlement in Canaan under Joshua

Moses became the leader of the Israelites and changed the slaves into freemen. He led them out of Egypt, and ruled and educated them during forty years in the wilderness, giving them a new religion at Mount Sinai.

Of the original number who left Egypt, only two, Joshua and Caleb, entered Canaan. Joshua succeeded Moses as leader. He proved himself a grave-hearted, strong-handed general. Under his leadership the Israelites entered Canaan and settled in tribal groups here and there throughout the land, and had constantly to contend with enemies around about—Moabites, Edomites, Ammonites, Philistines.

The Judges

Joshua's conquest of Canaan was incomplete. There was no federation of the tribes against their common enemies after his death, and the period of the judges which followed was a time of rude life and wild scenes: Dr. Marcus Dods aptly calls it "Israel's Iron Age." Several times a powerful enemy threatened to annihilate the Israelites, but each time, as the record says, "Jehovah raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those that despoiled them." Heroic Ethniel, Caleb's younger brother, freed them from the king of Mesopotamia; left-handed Ehud delivered them from the king of Moab; and mighty Shamgar saved them from the Philistines. Then came Deborah. After her were Gideon, Jephthah, Samson.

The Book of Judges

The body of the book narrates the deeds of the judges, and this is the outline of each story: sin, punishment, appeal, deliverance, peace. Apostasy, disobedience to

Jehovah, is followed by oppression, subjection to enemies; a shallow repentance ensues, and a judge is raised up to deliver the people and secure peace for a number of years, until the people again worship the gods of their heathen neighbors.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Through Palestine west of the Jordan there extends from north to south the central tableland, cut across by the triangular Plain of Esdraelon which separated the southern from the northern tribes. This plain had been allotted to the tribe of Issachar, but it was dominated at this time by the Canaanites. North of this plain were the tribes of Zebulun and Napthtali.

The apex of the plain is north of Mount Carmel. Its northern edge is a low ridge which separates it from the coast plain, and then the Galilean Hills, which form a steep wall attaining a thousand feet in height. On the northeast is Mount Tabor, 1,843 feet high. Its southern edge is Mount Carmel and the lower hills of Samaria which curve around and end at Mount Gilboa on the southwest.

Mount Tabor

Between Mount Gilboa and Mount Tabor, partly blocking the way to the Jordan, are low hills, the largest being the Hill of Moreh (now called Little Hermon).

Deborah's home was between Ramah and Bethel, towns which were not far north of Jebus, ancient Jerusalem. Barak's home was at Kedesh-Naphtali; that is, Kedesh in the territory of the tribe of Naphtali, four miles northwest of the waters of Merom.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Deborah had enthusiasm and zeal, but she could not free Israel without Barak. Barak was the man of action, but till Deborah aroused him, he did nothing for Israel. Your enthusiasm and zeal are invaluable, they kindle their like in your pupils, and your knowledge of what your pupils can and should do is also invaluable in directing their enthusiasm and zeal to definite good ends.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

WOMAN'S INFLUENCE IN COMMUNITY AND NATIONAL AFFAIRS

Beginning the Lesson

"God Almighty has been too much for me!" This was the exclamation of Napoleon on that memorable retreat from Moscow where he was beaten and the greater part of his army was destroyed, not by Russia's soldiers but by a blinding snowstorm and bitter cold. He had not expected winter to come so much earlier than usual, and he saw in that circumstance the hand of God against him. So Deborah saw the hand of God for her in an unexpected rainstorm. The story is one of the ancient lays of the Book of Judges. Who will tell it?

Deborah's Song

It is the greatest of war songs of any age or nation, the exultation of Deborah over Sisera's complete defeat, and subsequent assassination at the hands of Jael. No doubt personal revenge might seem to blaze high above Deborah's faith in her nation and her God, as the exciting spiritual principle which brings the scene in such marvelous vividness before her eyes. But though this feeling may add some of the fire to the latter part of the poem, it is clear that her faith in the national unity and in God as the source of that unity was the great binding thought of the whole. The whole tenor of the grand poem and the conclusion, "So let all thy enemies perish, O Lord; but let them that love thee be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might," at all events prove that the personal hatred was so closely bound up with the

representative feeling of the writer as a judge of Israel, and with her trust in the Lord of Hosts, that the latter lent a kind of halo to the unscrupulous ferocity of the former.—R. H. Hutton.

Other Deborahs

What about Harriet Beecher Stowe, "the little bit of a woman—just as thin and dry as a pinch of snuff," as she called herself? Did not President Lincoln welcome her at the White House with the words, "Why, Mrs. Stowe, right glad to see you. So you're the little woman who wrote the book that made this great war!"

Shall we not class Frances Willard, "a pre-eminent pioneer," among the prominent Deborahs of recent times? Hers is the only statue of a woman given a place in Statuary Hall at the Capitol in Washington with those of Washington, Lincoln, and other great national leaders. Of her Mrs. Mary A. Livermore said: "She surpassed all women of modern times as a leader, she was an orator who enchained thousands, a writer whose printed speeches were frequently like a blast of a bugle summoning to duty." She attained fame as an advocate of woman suffrage, of international and interracial peace, and especially of prohibition. She was the world-wide promoter of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union.

It was Judge Deborah in the days of the early life of the Israelites in Canaan, and it is Judge Florence Allen in our day here in the United States. Judge Allen's career on the bench in Ohio has been a distinguished one, where her leadership in national and international issues has been worthy of the highest praise. One writer refers to her "sound scholarship both in its general aspects and in the law; her simple devotion to duty as she sees it; her high character, and clever, straight-thinking mind which clears away all mental sophistry and rubbish and gets directly to the point."

Commander Evangeline Booth, head of the Salvation Army in America, is another Deborah. When to her was given the Eleanor Van Rensselaer Fairfax medal for eminent patriotic service, presented by the Society of Colonial Dames in the State of New York, it was said that she had done much to strengthen the national character by assisting the most needy section of American humanity.

"America's Portia," that is what our former Assistant Attorney General of the United States, Mabel Walker Willebrandt, has been called, "equally lawyer, equally politician, equally woman." In the Department of Justice it was said of her: "She is one of the best men in the department." And they added: "We like her fairness, her efficiency. She is so quick-minded. In a conference she goes straight to the heart of the matter. She has such a ready gift for words that she can instantly make her position clear. But best of all, she has a really judicial mind. She is not one of those people who say, 'Well, I'll think it over,' and when you come back next day they say, 'Well, on this side, of course, there is this reason; but on the other hand, there is that.' She weighs the evidence until the evidence is all in, and when it is all in, she knows what it proves—and she sticks."

"No Women Diplomats"

"No women diplomats," Sir Austen Chamberlain has said with an air of finality. Of course, they have to be endured if sent to the British Isles by "less enlightened" countries, for example, China and Chile! But so far as British women are concerned, official diplomacy is to remain a closed profession.

As the years go by, however, women are less and less satisfied with the arrangement which compels them to eat the pie without having a finger in its making. Occasionally a woman like the late Miss Gertrude Bell manages to stick an effective, and improving, finger in surreptitiously; and now American women are making a determined effort to alter the state of things which assumes that "men must work and women must weep" to the end of the chapter. At the sixth, and latest, Pan-American Congress, the assembly consisted of men delegates and one woman—the stenographer! Now, through the agency of the National Women's Party of America, a Pan-American Commission of Women has been formed to study the civil and political status of women from the international angle, to the end that women may have a voice in the making of treaties and covenants, and to prevent further discriminations against women as a sex being written by men into international agreements. This Commission of Women will have the power to recommend, to the next Pan-American Conference, international action on the status of women, and will have the prestige of the Pan-American Union behind it. Thus women will have

a voice in guiding affairs internationally in the Americas. Such a movement, it is felt, is bound to affect other nations—it may even lead to the League of Nations agreeing at last to form a similar Committee under its auspices.—Sunday School Chronicle of England.

A Message to Women

I hope that women will take an active part in what, for the want of a better name, we call politics. I want them to recognize the essential fact that they cannot do their full duty to their children, their homes, and their communities unless they do their utmost to see that the men and women who represent them in their city councils, in their state legislatures, in the executive offices and halls of Congress are of the type of men and women who will insure the nearest approach to their ideals of service.

We want every qualified woman voter to cast her vote at the polls, but we are equally concerned that the vote she casts shall be an intelligent vote. Women must not be content to be onlookers in the job of the nation's housekeeping, they must be participants.—Mary Sherman, ex-President General Federation of Women's Clubs.

To Women "Not Interested in Politics"

Not interested in politics! Do they realize what they are saying? Do they care whether there is war or peace? Do they care whether people are ignorant and brutish or educated and refined?

Do they care whether babies are fed or not? Do they care whether food is pure or poisoned? Do they care whether their children die of small-pox and diphtheria, or live healthy, wholesome lives?

Do they care whether there are slums or homes—rubbish heaps or gardens—prisons or universities? If they care at all for any of these things, then they must be interested in politics.

After all, what do we mean when we talk of politics? We simply mean the principles upon which our country is managed,—the laws by which we govern our lives. A civilization becomes more complicated as men congregate into large communities: as life generally becomes more complex, more and more must we act as parts of the community and less and less as individuals.

Our ancestors' problems are not ours. When each family or each village produced and consumed its own commodities, problems of social relationship were settled by actual individual contact. Today, we consume commodities produced by people thousands of miles away. We do not see the yellow man who grows our tea, the black man who plucks our banana. We wear clothes and use furniture made for us by people to whom we can never speak, with whom we can have no contact as individuals. Yet, as followers of Christ, we must treat them as we wish to be treated, give them the kind of life we consider good for ourselves. How can we do that? As individuals we cannot. We can only determine our relationship to our brothers and sisters at home and abroad by our attitude to home and foreign politics,—by the policies we support, by the laws we indirectly pass through our members of Parliament.—Minnie Pallister.

Woman and Political Office

One of the questions recently asked Dr. Cadman was: "Are the energies put forth by many women in striving for political office and in connection with the pursuit of careers in other masculine fields in accordance with the divine teachings?"

Through the columns of the New York Tribune Dr. Cadman answered: "The social background of the Bible was oriental, but Jesus was the first emancipator of womanhood. Even St. Paul reflects oriental prejudices in some of his references to women, but he is careful to appeal to what is seemly and conventional (compare 1 Cor. II).

"In this matter we must distinguish between custom and justice, and move in accordance with the fitness of things. The rights of women have been ratified before the bar of reason, and political, social or religious liberties have seldom been violated by them. The entrance of women into fields of activity hitherto monopolized by men creates some confusion. But the rapid changes of the last few years are beginning to adjust themselves."

For Bible Class Discussion

1. What is the modern woman doing for her community?
2. What influence have women on politics in our country?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Read the Book of Ruth. 2. What is the purpose of the book? 3. What characteristics of Naomi do you admire? 4. Of Ruth? 5. What qualities may David have inherited from his great-grandmother? 6. What lesson in world brotherhood has the story? 7. What races would you admit to our country? 8. What races would you be willing to have as neighbors? 9. What races would you admit to your church? 10. To your club? 11. Are we treating the colored race rightly?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

NOTABLE WOMEN PATRIOTS

Beginning the Lesson

In a speech delivered in England, this story was told:

An old Roman, who was deeply concerned in the welfare of his beloved city, dreamed that he saw a great army of Roman citizens march past him. In front were many old men carrying a banner inscribed, "We have been brave." "Yes," he replied, "but they are old and gray now, and Rome cannot rely on them for her future." Then came a younger body of men with a banner, "We are brave." "Yes," he replied, "but they will soon be old, and Rome cannot rely on them for her future." But at last there came a great crowd of boys crying out, "We will be brave." Then the old man's heart was gladdened. He felt satisfied that with the boys determined to be brave the future welfare of Rome was secured.

The fate of a nation depends on the brave souls that rise up to lead it. If there had been no Washington or Lincoln, what would have happened to America? If there had been no Oliver Cromwell or Pitt, what would have happened to Britain? These countries were saved and made great by these great men. If there had been no Deborah or Barak, what would have happened to the Israelites back in the times of the Judges? What is the whole story?

Deborah a National Leader

Miriam, like Deborah, was a prophetess, but when Miriam aspired to have some share in national affairs, she was punished for her presumption. At that time the Israelites had in Moses a far greater leader than Miriam could have been, whereas Deborah, by sheer force of character, became the acknowledged head of the tribes because she was greater than any man of her time. It was due to her genius and courage that something like national action by all the tribes was undertaken. Barak, whom she selected to be the commander-in-chief of the armies, refused the position, leaving that place to her, and taking himself the subordinate one of general. Barak was far inferior to her in courage, initiative, independence, contagious ardor, and faith. He would not undertake to carry out her plans alone. "If thou wilt go with me, then I will go," he said; "but if thou wilt not go with me, I will not go." He assembled his forces, but waited for Deborah to tell him when the time had come to strike the blow. "Up; for this is the day in which Jehovah hath delivered Sisera into thy hand," commanded Deborah, and then Barak went to the attack. It was Deborah who made the plans for the campaign, who inspired the army with courage, whose personal presence led the venture to a successful issue. Hers was a heroic personality, but she was strengthened for her task by her great faith in God, and to God she gave the victory.

The Maid of Orleans, Another Deborah

Joan of Arc was a frail girl, and yet she led the armies of France for years against the English, and was overcome finally only through treachery. In the following account of her generalship, I have condensed a chapter from "Historical Tales":

Joan of Arc was born at a critical period in history. Her country was in extremity. For the greater part of a century the dreadful "Hundred Years' War" had been waged, desolating France, destroying its people by thousands, bringing it more and more under the dominion of a foreign foe. The realm of France had now reached its lowest depth of disaster, its king uncrowned, its fairest regions overrun,—here by the English, there by the Burgundians,—the whole kingdom in peril of being taken and reduced to vassalage. The deliverer chosen of heaven was the young peasant girl at Domremy. Doubtless little Joan's soul burned with sympathy for her beloved land, asking herself if God could longer permit such wrongs and disasters to continue. Again and again came to her voices; they haunted her; and

still the burden of their exhortation was the same, that she should "go to France to deliver the kingdom." It was her enthusiastic belief in her divine mission that moved Joan of Arc. It was trust in her as God's agent of deliverance that filled the soul of France with new spirit, and unnerved her foes with superstitious fears.

Charles decided that The Maid should go to Orleans. A suit of armor was made to fit her. She was given the following of a war-chief. At length, on the 27th of April, the march to Orleans began.

What succeeded we may tell briefly. Inspired by the intrepid Maid, the besieged boldly attacked the British forts, and took them one after another. The English would not face her in open field, and under her leadership the French intrepidly stormed their ramparts. Joan pressed on; the English retreated; the bastille was taken without another blow. Back to Orleans marched the triumphant Maid, the people wild with joy. All through the night the bells rang out glad peals and the *Te Deum* was chanted. Much reason had they for joy; Orleans was saved. The Maid had fulfilled her mission. France was saved.

History contains no instance to match this. A year before, Joan of Arc, a low-born peasant girl, had occupied herself in tending sheep and spinning flax; her hours of leisure being given to dreams and visions. Now, clad in armor and at the head of an army, she was gazing in triumph on the flight of a hostile army, driven from its seemingly assured prey by her courage, intrepidity, and enthusiasm, while veteran soldiers obeyed her commands, experienced leaders yielded to her judgment. Never had the world seen its like. The Maid of Orleans had made her name immortal.

A Beautiful Letter to a Noble Patriot

A letter dated November 21, 1864, reads as follows:

Dear Madam: I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours very sincerely and respectfully,

A. Lincoln.

Frances Willard, a Notable Patriot

"One Sunday evening in a Western farmhouse a plain farmer was teaching his little girl Charles Wesley's hymn, 'A Charge to Keep I Have.' When they came to the verse:

'To serve the present age,
My calling to fulfil,—
Oh, may it all my powers engage
To do my Master's will,'

the godly farmer told his little daughter that the Creator had brought her into the world in order that she might fulfil that verse. The child believed it. Thenceforth that was her understanding of what she was born for. And because that verse took possession of that little girl and started her on a great career, Frances E. Willard stands in perpetual marble in Statuary Hall in the Capitol at Washington, the one woman whose statue has a place in the nation's Hall of Fame."

Lady Henry Somerset's praises of Frances Willard—"Remarkable as a speaker, excellent as a writer, with a genius for organization, perhaps Miss Willard's rarest gift is the power of inspiring others with a belief in what they can accomplish"—attributes to her the very qualities that Deborah possessed in such marked degree.

Sentence Sermon

Patriotism is God's way of training individuals for common action for unselfish ends.—William Adams Brown.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Read the whole story of Ruth. 2. What characteristics did Ruth show? 3. What characteristics did Naomi show? 4. To what race did Ruth belong, and how was she received among Naomi's people? 5. What relation did Ruth become to David? 6. What can we do for our neighbors of other races?

NAOMI AND RUTH (A Study in Racial Relationships)

GOLDEN TEXT: And he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth. Acts 17-26

LESSON The Book of Ruth DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 61.1-7

RUTH 1.6 Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that Jehovah had visited his people in giving them bread. 7 And she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah. 8 And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each of you to her mother's house: Jehovah deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. 9 Jehovah grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voice, and wept. 10 And they said unto her, Nay, but we will return with thee unto thy people.

14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her.

15 And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her god: return thou after thy sister-in-law. 16 And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; 17 where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: Jehovah do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me. 18 And when she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, she left off speaking unto her.

19 So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and *the women* said, Is this Naomi? 20 And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara; for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. 21 I went out full, and Jehovah hath brought me home again empty; why call ye me Naomi, seeing Jehovah hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me? 22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, who returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

EXPLANATIONS, COMMENTS AND ORIENTALISMS

I. THE BEGINNING OF THE STORY, 1.1-13. In the days of the Judges there was a famine in the land of Canaan, and to escape it a Bethlehemite, Elimelech, and his wife Naomi, and their two sons, left their home and settled in Moab across the Jordan. The Jews have a legend to the effect that Elimelech was of a princely house, a descendant of Amminadab, the father-in-law of Aaron, that he was wealthy, and left the country in the time of famine in order to preserve his wealth intact, for he was afraid of being besieged by his starving brethren.

In Moab the two sons married daughters of that alien land, Ruth and Orpah. Ten years passed, father and sons found their graves there, and Naomi, now poor, whatever she had been in Bethlehem, determined to return to her native land. Farewells seldom take place in the home in eastern lands, and Ruth and Orpah carried out the usual custom when they accompanied Naomi a short distance on her way. When Naomi thought they had gone far enough to show her fitting respect, she stopped to dismiss them. With tears and kisses she bade them return to their homes and let her go on her way alone.

II. RUTH'S GREAT DECISION, verses 14-18. Though it grieved Orpah to part with her mother-in-law, she kissed her and returned as Naomi had urged her to do. Ruth, however, clung to Naomi. With all her power Naomi sought to dissuade Ruth from accompanying her. "Behold," she said, "thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her god (Chemosh): return thou after thy sister-in-law." In answer Ruth uttered those beautiful words which have become so famous through the ages: "Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." The ancient belief was that each people had its own God, and that in going to another land one must necessarily serve the god of that land: compare 1 S. 26.19.

"Ruth was a Moabitess, of an accursed race, who according to the law of Moses was not allowed to enter the congregation of the covenant. While this story finally teaches that no such disability remains when faith in God is exercised, we must not forget the difficulty as it existed for Ruth; how the people would be likely to

look at her, how she herself, as she came into contact with the religion of the Hebrew people, would realize the greatness of her distance. Again, there was nothing calculated to allure her from the standpoint of material prosperity. Those she had known of the people of Jehovah had been compelled to leave their land on account of famine. From them she knew of the perils of those who had remained in the land, and all the sadness of their condition. She came back with Naomi into poverty, and to people who in all probability were hostile to them both" (G. Campbell Morgan).

"Large is the life that flows for others' sakes;
Expends its best, its noblest effort makes;
Devotion rounds the man and makes him whole;
Love is the measure of the human soul" (James Buckham).

"Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried," Ruth further asserted. The climax is reached in these words, for to be buried in a strange land was almost as abhorrent to her as it is for the Chinese of today. "The simple dignity of the iteration in varying phrase till the climax is reached beyond which no promise could go, the quiet fervor of the feeling, the thought which seems to have almost a Christian depth—all were beautiful, pathetic, noble."

Ruth had vowed to share four things with her mother: her lot, her nationality, her religion, her grave, and she sealed her vow with these words: "Jehovah do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." This is an allusion to the custom sometimes observed of slaying an animal when a formal oath was taken, and it means that she asked to have the same fate as such a victim if she failed to keep her vow.

No wonder that Naomi, seeing that Ruth was steadfastly minded to go with her, ceased to urge her to return. Steadfastness of devotion is a virtue that all admire. "Whether seen in Antigone of the Greeks—that ideal sister who would not desert even the dead body of her brother—or in Penelope, who trusted for twenty years in the returning ships of her husband, or in the disciples around Christ, who died at last, here and there, in obedience to their attachment, or in the long line of martyrs whose blood is sprinkled over the leaves of history, this steadfastness stands forth in unwavering excellence" (David Ewing).

"Fine, true friendships are possible whenever and wherever there are fine and true men or women"

III. THE ARRIVAL IN BETHLEHEM, verses 19-22. When Naomi and Ruth reached Bethlehem, all the city was moved about them, and the women said, "Is this Naomi?" How naturally it all reads! How true to life is this expression of astonishment at the change which ten years had wrought in Naomi! "No doubt the little hamlet had been all aflame with gossip when, ten years before, the rich sheep-master, Elimelech, had left it, and many pious heads had been shaken over his sin in going to sojourn among the heathen (as Samuel Cox comments). And, no doubt, on Naomi's return, many who would have shared that sin if they could, and many who had committed far worse sins than any of which she had been guilty, once more shook their heads in grave rebuke, and were found to recognize the judgments of an offended God in the calamities which had befallen her. It may be feared that there was more blame than pity in the ejaculation, 'This, Naomi!'"

"Call me not Naomi, call me Mara; for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me," Naomi said to her people. "I went out full, and Jehovah hath brought me home again empty; why call ye me Naomi, seeing Jehovah hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?" Naomi means Winsome; Mara means Bitter.

IV. THE END OF THE STORY, Chapters II-IV. It was the beginning of barley harvest when the two reached Bethlehem, and Ruth went forth to glean in the fields and support her mother and herself. Farmers in Palestine, even to this day, do not have their houses on their farmlands, but live in houses closely huddled together in a village. They go out to their fields in the early morning, taking their bread with them, and return at night. If the fields are very far away they sleep on the ground or under a booth during the nights of harvest. Bands of reapers go from one harvest district to another. The reapers use sickles, and girls tie the cut grain into sheaves. Women and children follow the reapers and glean any stray wisps that the reapers overlook. Thus Ruth gleaned in the field of Boaz,

and thus she came to his attention. It was the law that the next of kin in the family of a husband who died childless must marry his widow. Boaz was related to Elimelech, Ruth's father-in-law, and he fulfilled the law and married Ruth. Their son was Obed; Obed's son was Jesse; Jesse's son was David, who became the great king of Israel.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The History of the Book of Judges and of the Book of Ruth

"And it came to pass in the days when the judges judged, that there was a famine in the land": thus the Book of Ruth begins. No greater contrast could be found than between these two books, and it is difficult to realize that both belong to the same land and time. But just as in the early history of our country the colonists engaged in agriculture in the periods of peace that intervened between the wars with the Indians, so the Israelites had times of peace between the successive wars with the native inhabitants of Canaan.

While the events of the Book of Ruth were enacted "in the days when the judges judged," they were not recorded until long afterwards. The first verse tells us that the time of the Judges lay far behind; the presupposition of the whole fourth chapter is that the customs there recorded had long become obsolete; the last verses were written long after Ruth's death. It is an interesting supposition that the book was written in the time of Ezra, as a protest against his rigorous measures demanding the divorce of all foreign wives, for Ruth the Moabite becomes an Israelite indeed, with faith enough to adopt Israel's God as her God, and is deemed worthy of being the ancestress of Israel's greatest king.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Land of Moab

When Elimelech and Naomi left Bethlehem for Moab they left fields that were sown with stones on the rocky Judean hills for what was then a veritable garden spot, the land of Moab. Moab occupied a part of the tableland east of the Jordan Valley: its eastern limit was the desert; its southern, Edom; its western, the Dead Sea and Jordan Valley. Its northern border was at times the River Arnon and at others nearer the Wady Heshban, at the northern end of the Dead Sea. This tableland is about 3,000 feet above sea level, and 4,300 feet above the Dead Sea. Today it is a great pasture land for sheep and goats, cattle and camels.

A Moabite
From a Bas-Relief

Moab had been the eyesore of Israel. It had blocked her passage through the desert. It had given her its solemn malediction. It had leagued against her with Midian. It had proved a grave to her lawgiver, Moses.

From Moab to Bethlehem

To reach Bethlehem, Naomi and Ruth had to descend into the hot Jordan Valley, which at the head of the Dead Sea lies 1,300 feet below the ocean, and then ascend to Bethlehem. Bethlehem lies on a terraced hillside six miles south of Jerusalem.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE WAY TO WORLD BROTHERHOOD

Beginning the Lesson

When a great poet was asked why he did not write a poem upon the story of Ruth, he replied, "I dare not, lest I mar that which is already perfect." The story, which is accounted the greatest pastoral idyl in all literature, is so familiar to us all that we shall not take the time to recall it. What are its lessons?

"No doubt the story is a love story, and is designed to set forth the power of

love to overcome all the alienations, hostilities and prejudices of nature and of that second nature which we call 'habit.' But it is not a story of romantic love between a young man and a young woman. It is the story of a woman's love for a woman; and, strangely as it would sound in the ears of our modern wits, it is the story of a young wife's passionate and devoted love for her mother-in-law. Ruth's tender, self-sacrificing affection for Naomi is the very charm of the story. It is in the strength of love that she abandons Moab and her father's house; it is in the strength of love that she also conquers the prejudices and jealousies of Bethlehem, and compels even Hebrews to admire her virtue and record her fame." A girl of another and hated race, she wins her way into the heart of the people of Bethlehem and finally marries into what becomes the royal line of Israel, becoming the great-grandmother of their mighty King David.

But One Man

Poised in space a sphere. As the goddess bent over it and looked intently she saw not sixteen hundred million men as she had expected, but one man. He tilled the soil; he sailed the sea; he hated; he learned; he loved; he prayed. He drew near to beauty; he cared for his child; he waited on the threshold of eternity. Once as she looked, she said, "He is brown," but a second glance showed him to be white. On yet another day she found that she had been wrong. He was black. But she found that this error of hers about his color did not matter because he was so completely the same whenever she gazed into the sphere. There was nothing else to be seen, nothing else to be said. Here was man. The goddess was very wise, hence she knew from this man's behavior what to say about his past. She discovered that when he lived for eight thousand years beneath the sun he took on certain ways of responding to situations, whereas when he stopped on the curve or near the poles of his sphere for a time he felt and acted in quite a different manner. The goddess was not disturbed by these differences in logic because she understood them and because they added greatly to the charm and skill of the creature in the sphere. Nor was she surprised at the unity of this being because deities are accustomed to unity. She was only wistful because she had so little way of sharing her discovery with the sphere dweller himself. Intuitively she knew that he needed to know what she knew. Would she be able to find some means of communicating with him? Would he ever know himself?

One is conscious of the dangers of rhetoric and sentiment. Divergencies as wide as the world separate its people; economic facts divide them. If one tried to blur them into an anæmic synthesis one would mercifully be prevented by the nature of the case. Priceless is the individual destiny of each race and nation. Yet deeper than differences, deeper than destinies are the laws of body, mind and spirit. By those laws there are not sixteen hundred million men but one man. Yesterday he was found in the sun south of the Himalayas; today leading the children of Israel into the promised land; tomorrow he will use well, for there is about him the look of a son of God.—Condensed from Rounding the Earth, by Winnifred Wygal in The Womans Press.

The Way to World Brotherhood

"I say that life is indeed darkness save when there is urge.
And all urge is blind save when there is knowledge.
And all knowledge is vain save when there is work.
And all work is empty save when there is love.
And when you work with love you bind yourself to yourself, and to one another, and to God."—Kahlil Gibran, of Syria.

A Black God

Among the Negroes of the United States a church has been founded which teaches its members to think of Jesus as a black man. In the opening procession there was a painting of "The Black Man of Sorrows," and also one of a Negro Madonna bending over a Negro Christ-child. For Jesus, "the little brown man of Nazareth," was certainly not pure "white," and were he living in our day he would in some places have the color line drawn against him.

These pleas for a black God and a black Savior are a significant reflection on the white races, and their religion, and their relationships to colored people. They arise out of a passionate sense of injustice. Colored men are tired of being despised because of their color. They are increasingly in revolt against the religion of white-

ness and the assumption "that of all hues whiteness alone is inherently and obviously better than blackness and that the one virtue therefore is to be white," as Du Bois puts it. So the colored people are beginning to make God in their own black image, because we have made him in our own white one. A white tribal deity is obviously useless to them.

That color problem will be aggravated rather than solved by the black peoples worshiping a black God. The only solution will be when all peoples cease making God in their own image, especially when the white and conquering races prove that they worship no mere tribal or racial deity, but one who is the Lord and Father of us all.—F. C. Hoggarth.

An Experiment in Neighborliness

Brotherhood had been the topic of the lesson in a men's Bible class, and at the close one of the members made this suggestion (as reported by Jay S. Stowell in The Adult Bible Class Monthly).

"Take our own situation right here in this town. We have had several thousand Negroes come into town within the past few years. They live in the other end of town, and we are all aware of the fact that things haven't been going any too well. The employers of labor seem to be glad enough to get their help, but I wouldn't say that the treatment the rest of us have given these people was any too brotherly. The papers have said some rather disagreeable things, and, as you know, two or three houses have been burned when Negroes have moved too close to white people.

"What I propose is that we begin to apply some of the things we've been talking about this morning. If everyone here would take it on himself to get acquainted with one Negro this week and then come next Sunday prepared to tell about his experiences, I believe that we would have made a beginning toward a better understanding that might keep us from serious difficulties later. It might also bring some of us face to face with the question whether we really believe in brotherhood or not. If it is in order, I move that we devote our session next Sunday morning to a presentation of our experiences in getting acquainted with our Negro neighbors this week."

The motion was seconded after some delay. There wasn't much discussion; and when the vote was taken, only a few voted. As there was no dissenting voice, however, the plan was declared adopted.

The following week it was revealed that one man had struck up an acquaintance with a Negro who often rode on the same car with him. Another had fallen into step with and introduced himself to a Negro whom he had seen before and who happened to be walking just ahead of him. One member had got into conversation with a Negro woman doing housework in the home. A fourth member had manifested an interest in the Negro porter employed in the drug store. One man had deliberately called upon the Negro minister, and another had made progress in getting acquainted with the Negro doctor.

When the time came for discussion everyone wanted to talk at once. The hour was one long to be remembered. Those who were present learned more about the recent Negro migration to the North than they had ever known before, and they also got an insight into what the Negroes of Albion were thinking about, what their ambitions were, and what difficulties they were meeting.

It was proposed to ask their pastor to arrange an exchange of pulpits for one Sunday with the Negro pastor. He did this somewhat reluctantly, but after preaching to the Negro congregation he came and thanked the Bible Class for their suggestion. He had met the people after the service and they had told him that they had come north to get better public schools and better opportunities for their children. "As I came through that end of town I was a little ashamed," the pastor said, "and I wondered if they were really finding it an improvement. I believe there are some very definite things we could do to change conditions, and before very long I shall bring to you some concrete proposals in the carrying out of which I shall need your help."

How Other Races See Us

From a number of letters written by foreign students in American colleges and published in the International Journal of Religious Education the following excerpts are taken:

Gregory Vlastos, a native of Turkey writes: We were standing in a row at Ellis Island, a line of about twenty men, passing by three doctors who looked at us and handled us as if we were a bunch of cattle for the stockyards. For the greater convenience of the examiners we were all ordered to be stripped naked. But the room was cold, and one poor shivering Pole had kept a shirt around his back. When his turn came the doctor saw it, slapped him on the back, and ordered him to throw the rag off and start again at the other end of the line—which meant another fifteen minutes of shivering in the cold. It made the Statue of Liberty look like a bad joke.

Fortunately I did not have to stay in Ellis Island very long. I got out and saw the real America. I have lived eighteen months in it since and I have nothing to hold against it, except this, that I am often reminded that I am a foreigner. Not that I am mistreated. Often it is just the opposite. But I am usually one of two things: a bizarre novelty like a kangaroo, or a special object for the practice of kindness and the other Christian virtues.

Sumie Yamamato, a Japanese: I have enjoyed unusual opportunities of friendship and leadership. This, however, does not mean that I have not had discouragements as a Japanese in America. America's ignorance and superiority complex, the patronizing attitude on the part of some Christians coupled with their great desire to convert the "heathen," the crudeness of democracy all contributed to my disappointments. But in this day of world citizenship, what reason has one to blame any nationality or individual except himself? To me, personal responsibility is the last analysis. And in watching those who have broken down barriers, I find them resting on the same principle.

Educationally speaking, today's type of craze to know of other cultures will not solve the inter-racial difficulties, because prejudice is a matter of emotions, as well as ignorance of facts. Only inter-racial contacts intelligently directed will educate us emotionally, and this we can never accomplish by a system of segregation. Will the American brand of Christianity allow such an education?

Akintunde B. Dipeolu, from West Africa: My problem in Christian America has been where to eat and where not to eat; where to go and where not to go; and even where to worship and where I cannot worship God, though a Christian. This was strongly impressed upon me the first day I landed in America, at the port of entry, and while I was marooned in Ellis Island for six weeks I was made to feel that I was a black man in a white man's country. What a story to tell when I get back home!

But there is another side to this experimentation. Throughout my college and Seminary days at Talladega College and now at the Chicago Theological Seminary and the University of Chicago, I have also come in contact with genuine American Christians. I have enjoyed the cordial hospitality of their homes. In conferences, conventions, seminars and social gatherings I have met American students and students from other countries. In our deliberations we have faced the truth without any hypocritical evasions.

My lost faith has been restored. Here in our Seminary dormitory my roommate and one of my chums is a native of Indiana, an honor graduate of De Pauw University—a white student!

Kensuli Kawachi, from Hawaii: Being a theological student in addition to being a citizen from Hawaii where inter-racial amity is the dominant and atmospheric spirit, my mental constitution is rather organized to view all occurrences with a point of advantage given to the other fellow.

To a foreign student traveling in the United States, there are certain pertinent points which formulate his first impression of this country. These high points as I see them are the immigration officials, the service given by the ticket agents, the courtesy returned by Hotels, the taxi service, *et cetera.*

It is these small things that jar or lubricate one's feelings. Obviously no one has the right to condemn sweepingly that a nation is unchristian because of few individual cases which are discomforting. The Christian principle as exercised by a nation involves such major issues as her attitude and treatment towards immigrants from foreign countries; her policy of foreign investment; her attitude towards foreign missionary work; her interest in international affairs; her assurance and protection of individual rights and properties, etc. It is a discussion entirely in its ethical field. My conception of what native America is as a Christian nation remains yet to be seen. I can only conclude at this time by stating that my experiences thus far have been entirely happy.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Ruth the Decided. See chapter with this heading in Matheson's Representative Women of the Bible.

2. The contribution of "foreigners" to the national greatness of our land.

3. World brotherhood. See Who Is My Neighbor? by Bruno Lasker; Christianity and the Race Problem, by W. F. Oldham.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Who was Penninah, and how did she affect Hannah? 2. What was Eli's character, and how did he rule Israel? 3. How important for a child's character is the training he receives in his pre-school years? 4. What religious memories of your early home are most helpful? 5. What are the signs of a godly home?

TOPICS FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

OUR NEIGHBORS OF OTHER RACES

Beginning the Lesson

When our Canadian Pacific steamer with its company of English and Americans was in the harbor of Rio de Janiero, word was brought to the steamer that the rabble of the city were plotting harm to it, because they hated Americans. Our captain ordered the word spread that it was a Canadian, not an American ship, and that its passengers were English. A few months later Mr. Hoover, then president-elect, visited Rio and nothing was left undone to make his stay a pleasant one. He came with messages of good-will, with the express purpose of understanding better the great country of Brazil and of helping that country to better understand ours, and since that time the rabble of Rio has had a much friendlier attitude toward Americans. If we knew, really knew, our neighbors of other races, and our neighbors of other races really knew us, what would be the result? Said a noted man once that he would not meet a certain man because he hated him, and he realized that if he should come to know him, he could no longer hate him!

Back in the days of the Judges about which we heard last week, there was a family of Bethlehem who left their country and went over into the country of Moab, where dwelt an alien people. What is the name of the Book which tells us how they were received there, and how the people of Bethlehem learned to love the Moabitess who returned with one of that family? (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

A Good Neighbor to a Family of Another Race

One day as Jimmie came in the back door he called out, "Mother, I've brought my friend Angelo home to supper." Angelo waited bashfully on the doorstep. Jimmie's mother put her lips to her small son's ear. "He's very dirty, Jimmie," she whispered. "I know it," said Jimmie coolly, "but I'll wash him." Jimmie Senior had just arrived when Jimmie Junior appeared with Angelo. "This is Angelo Vinci, father," Jimmie explained; "I've just been washing him." Jimmie Senior patted his small son on the back. "You may always bring Angelo to supper Friday nights," he said. Then he turned to his wife and his mother: "Did you hear the mayor say that we should all try to make the Italian colony become Americanized? It strikes me that our Jimmie has gone about it in a sensible way." Eleanor smiled a little absent-mindedly. She was noticing how closely Angelo was imitating Jimmie's manners, with a very fair degree of success. Angelo wore Jimmie's blouse home.

The next week he appeared with a little parcel. "My mother thank you for the blouse," he said politely, "and she send you this." Eleanor unrolled the little parcel and found a piece of handmade lace. "O Angelo, this is wonderful!" she exclaimed. "My mother make it for you," Angelo said. "She cannot sew like Americans but she can make lace."

Grandmother's hobby was lace. "Does she make other kinds of lace, Angelo?" she demanded. Angelo spread out his hands in a sweeping gesture. "Many, many kinds," he said dramatically. "I'll take you home with me after school tomorrow." Eleanor and her mother were received with open arms. Beautiful, intricate pieces of lace and hand-woven bedspreads and table linen were brought out for their inspection. "But I cannot make an American blouse for Angelo," sighed the mother. "I'll come down and cut one out for you," volunteered Eleanor's mother. So Jimmie's grandmother found herself teaching a group of Italian women to make clothes for small

boys. And in the same delightful, neighborly fashion they taught her to cook many things.

Jimmie's father looked after the two boys thoughtfully. "If all America would neighbor like Jimmie," he said reflectively, "our foreign problem would be gone in a year."—Mary Davis in The Congregationalist.

Hateful Words

Dago and Sheeny and Chink,
Greaser and Nigger and Jap;
The devil invented these terms, I think,
To hurl at each hopeful chap
Who comes so far from over the foam
To this land of his heart's desire,
To rear his brood, to build his home
And to kindle his hearthstone fire.
While the eyes with joy are blurred,
Lo, we make the strong man sink,
And stab the soul with the hateful word—
Dago and Nigger and Chink.—McIntyre.

"Those Foreigners, the Slavs"

There is much to say for "those foreigners" who have contributed so much to our country and who have so much more than even a physical and a material contribution to make. What of their culture inherent and national? The Slavic people gave to the world a Kopernik, or Copernicus, the geographer of the heavens, before the Italians gave it a Galileo, or the Germans a Kepler, or the British an Isaac Newton. They gave the world a John Huss before the Germans gave it a Martin Luther; yea, even before Huss, another Slav, by name Milich, preached by word and action the ideals of the Reformation. A great educationist, Jan Amos Komensky, usually styled by the Latin form of his name—Comenius—was the forerunner of Rousseau, Pestalozzi, and Froebel. The religious community of the Bohemian (Moravian) United Brethren is a real marvel of history, and the founder of this church, Peter Chelichicky, is more and more appreciated. The Slavs also gave a Roger Joseph Boskovich, the famous professor of astronomy, mathematics and physics, in Milan, before the Germans gave a Kant. One of the greatest of modern inventors, Nikola Tesla, is a Serb (son of a Serbian rector), now a citizen of the United States. The whole world knows Frederick Chopin and Paderewski, the distinguished pianists and composers. Their compositions entitle them to rank with Wagner and Beethoven. Shevchenko, the Shakespeare of the Ukraine, is the great national poet of the Ukraine, and one of the great poets of the world. Conrad, the son of distinguished Polish exiles from Russia, easily took a leading place among our school of English fiction. Professor Thomas G. Mazaryk, of the Czech University of Prague, son of a coachman, and a blacksmith's apprentice until his fifteenth year, today is one of the greatest Slavic philosophers, sociologists, educators, politicians, and journalists of international reputation.—W. H. Pike, in The New Outlook.

An Experiment in Neighborliness

See the preceding Topic.

Sentence Sermons

Love alone can determine who is your neighbor—Marcus Dods.

The love which has no frontiers and no favored race is the love of the homeless Christ.

God will not seek thy race
Nor will he ask thy birth;
Alone he will demand of thee,
"What hast thou done on earth?"—From the Persian.

Questions for Pupils to Look up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What vow did Jacob once make in a prayer? (Gen. 28.20.) 2. What does 1 S. 2.26 say about Samuel? 3. What reasons had Samuel for honoring his mother? 4. What is the fifth commandment? 5. What does Paul say in Eph. 6.1-4? 6. How can you honor your father and mother? 7. Are you a Christian at home?

HANNAH (A Godly Mother)

GOLDEN TEXT: My son, hear the instruction of thy father, And forsake not the law of thy mother.
Proverbs 1.8

LESSON 1 Samuel 1.1-28; 2.1-11, 18, 19; 3.1-18

DEVOTIONAL READING Luke 1.46-55

1 SAMUEL 1.9 So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest was sitting upon his seat by the door-post of the temple of Jehovah. 10 And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto Jehovah, and wept sore. 11 And she vowed a vow, and said, O Jehovah of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thy handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thy handmaid, but wilt give unto thy handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto Jehovah all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

12 And it came to pass, as she continued praying before Jehovah, that Eli marked her mouth. 13 Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. 14 And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. 15 And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I poured out my soul before Jehovah. 16 Count not thy handmaid for a wicked woman; for out of the abundance of my complaint and my provocation have I spoken hitherto. 17 Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace; and the God of Israel grant thy petition that thou hast asked of him. 18 And she said, Let thy handmaid find favor in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat; and her countenance was no more *sad*.

24 And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of meal, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of Jehovah in Shiloh: and the child was young. 25 And they slew the bullock, and brought the child to Eli. 26 And she said, Oh, my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto Jehovah. 27 For this child I prayed; and Jehovah hath given me my petition which I asked of him. 28 therefore also I have granted him to Jehovah; as long as he liveth he is granted to Jehovah. And he worshipped Jehovah there.

2.19 Moreover his mother made him a little robe, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. HANNAH'S PRAYER FOR A SON, 1.9-11. Hannah and her husband Elkanah went regularly every year to the Sanctuary at Shiloh, there to worship and offer sacrifice at one of the great religious feasts, probably "The Feast of Ingathering," or "Feast of Tabernacles," which was held after the grape and olive harvest.

As was customary, after a portion of the sacrificial victim was burnt at the altar, and another portion had been given the priests, the family partook of the rest within the sanctuary precincts. But Hannah could not eat, for sad and bitter thoughts filled her mind as she contrasted her childless lot with that of Peninnah, Elkanah's other wife, who was blessed with many children. After the meal was over she presented herself in the temple to pray to Jehovah. Her prayer was accompanied by many tears as, standing with her face toward the ark, she made her vow that if Jehovah would bless her with a boy, she would consecrate him all the days of his life to Jehovah, and he should be a Nazarite, one set apart to the Lord, of which his unshaven head would be a token. The characteristic marks of the Nazarite were the refraining from wine and all intoxicating drinks, the letting the hair grow, and the avoidance of defilement by corpses.

"Every child in a truly Christian home is a dedicated child. He is committed to God's service in so far as one person can commit another. His name is written in the Book of Life, in pencil, it is true, which may be rubbed out. Still, his name has been entered. He is nominated for the Heavenly Company and is being trained for it" (R. C. Gillie).

II. ELI'S SUSPICION AND BLESSING, 1.12-18. Eli, the priest, was sitting in the doorway of the temple, and noticing how Hannah's lips moved, though she uttered no words, he jumped to the conclusion that she was drunk. As Bunsen remarks, such heart felt prayer seems not to have been usual at that time, but Lange

finds some ground for Eli's hasty suspicion of Hannah in the frequent occurrence of such cases in connection with the sacrificial meals; "and this points to a certain externalized and brutalized condition of the religious-moral life in the very precincts of the sanctuary." See Isaiah 28.7; Amos 2.8.

How grieved Hannah must have been when Eli roughly said, "How long wilt thou be drunken? Put away thy wine from thee!" His words might well have been spoken to his own dissolute sons. "No, my lord," she answered, "I am heavy-hearted, not drunk, and I have been pouring out my soul before Jehovah. Do not take me to be a wicked woman, "for I have been praying out of the depth of my need."

We are too prone to expect others to ascribe the best motives to our actions, and ourselves to ascribe the worst motives for others' actions. Did you read a few years ago that heart-breaking story If Winter Comes? Do you recall how all the hero's good deeds were translated into bad, how hastily bad motives were ascribed to his good acts, how cruelly he was misjudged? Before imputing motives to another, put yourself in his place. If there might have been more than one cause for his acts, why not conclude that he was motivated by the noblest of them, rather than by the worst? Is not that how you would have others judge you?

"Go in peace," then said Eli, and added a wish that her petition might be granted. With a respectful word of farewell, "Let thy handmaid find favor in thy sight," Hannah went her way, and, no longer sad, gladly partook of food.

III. THE ANSWER TO THE PRAYER, 1.19, 20. Hannah returned to her home in Ramah. When she was made happy by the coming of a son, she named him Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the Lord. Hebrew scholars tell us that the word *Samuel* has no connection with the Hebrew word for *asked,* and they connect the first part of the name with the Semitic root for "name," taking Samuel to mean "Name of God."

IV. THE NEXT ANNUAL FESTIVAL, verses 21-23. Elkanah and his household went to Shiloh the next year as usual, but Hannah remained at home, saying to her husband, "I will not go up until the child be weaned; and then I will bring him, that he may appear before Jehovah, and there abide for ever." To her remaining at home Elkanah agreed, but added, "Only the Lord establish his word": Jehovah had granted her prayer and given her a son, he seems to say, and she must not fail Jehovah in giving the boy to his service and thus "establishing" his word. Calvin understands the words thus: "Elkanah seeks from God, and suppliantly begs with prayers, that, since God has bestowed on him male offspring, he will consecrate him and make him fit for his service, and direct him by the power of his Holy Spirit, by which his service shall be grateful and acceptable to God." The Septuagint Version reads "thy word," meaning, "May Jehovah permit thee to carry out thy intention."

"So far was Elkanah from delighting to cross Hannah, that he referred the matter entirely to her. Behold how good and pleasant a thing it is, when yoke-fellows thus draw even in the yoke, and accommodate themselves to one another; each thinking well of what the other does, especially in works of piety and charity" (Matthew Henry).

V. HANNAH GIVES HER ONLY SON TO THE SERVICE OF JEHOVAH, verses 24-28. When Hannah had weaned her boy, he was probably three years old (see Light from Oriental Life) she brought him to the house of the Lord in Shiloh. She brought also an offering, as the law required for the first-born—three bullocks, a bushel of meal and a bottle of wine. The Septuagint Version has "a three-year-old bullock," instead of "three bullocks," which accords with "the bullock" mentioned in the next verse as slain.

Hannah made herself known to Eli the priest by recalling the time when he had seen her praying in the sanctuary, and then she presented the boy for whom she had prayed.

VI. HANNAH'S SONG OF THANKSGIVING, 2.1-10.

VII. HANNAH'S ANNUAL VISIT TO SAMUEL, 2.18, 19. The child Samuel was clothed in a linen ephod, which "must have been a short skirt girt about the waist, and a distinctive part of the priest's dress. It was as a boy-priest that

Samuel 'ministered before the Lord.'" His special duty was at sunrise to put out the light that burned all night in the golden candlestick, and to open the doors of the tabernacle. From year to year Hannah came with her husband to offer the annual sacrifice, and never failed to bring Samuel a robe which she had made for him. Probably his father raised the flax which Hannah spun and wove and then made the cloth into the robe.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

And she vowed a vow, and said, O Jehovah of hosts; if thou wilt give unto thy handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto Jehovah, 1.11. A writer says that the modern Bagdad Jewess, if childless, embraces the big cannon before the governor's palace. "O great gun, mighty gun, I wish a child, and if you will grant my wish, I will make you a present when I untie this string." Thus praying, she binds a little faded rag about the cannon. When her child is born she takes into the house a pig to guard it from all harm.

When she had weaned him, 1.24. "Hebrew mothers usually nursed their children for two to three years, but a period of five to six years is not unknown in Palestine at the present time. The longer period is suggested here by the fact that Samuel was able from the first to minister at Shiloh, 1 S. 2.11."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Time Following the Period of the Judges

Deborah and Barak, Gideon, and Jephthah repulsed the Midianites and Ammonites on the east of Canaan, and quieted the Canaanite tribes on the north. Samson made fitful efforts to break the power of the Philistines on the southwest, but they were powerful and their invasions continued. Eli became both judge and priest, but he ruled with a weak hand, and politically and morally the nation was at a very low ebb. A wise head and a strong arm were needed, and the child Samuel grew up to fill that need. He was the last and greatest of the judges, the first of the prophets, and the connecting link between the period of the judges and that of the monarchy.

Samuel was born at Ramah and it was a journey of twelve miles to Shiloh, the religious capital of Israel, where the ark was housed.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE VALUE OF A GODLY HOME

Beginning the Lesson

Hannah dedicated her babe to God's service. Today when parents have their children baptized they, too, dedicate them to God. As soon as Samuel was old enough to be taken away from home, his parents took him to Shiloh and left him there to be educated as a prophet of God. Once a year only they went to see him, for they had given him to God's service and they would not claim him oftener. For several years there was no conscious self-dedication to God on the part of Samuel. Unquestionably he aided Eli, he helped in the temple service, and he learned about God. Up to a certain time his mind was merely receptive. Then came a day when he began to ask himself questions. "What did it all mean? Who is God? Can I ever know God for myself? Shall I take the faith in which I have been trained as the guiding principle of my life?" Then it was that he heard God speaking to him. At first he thought it was a human voice—that of the aged Eli—and then he knew that it was the Divine Voice speaking within his own soul. This was Samuel's conscious self-dedication to God and God's service.

Somewhat similar is the process by which a child in a godly home is led today to self-dedication. "I do not remember the time when I did not pray, when I did not think of myself as a child of God," said a great preacher, "but there came a time when I deliberately ratified and confirmed my parents' choice of a Christian life for me. I cannot call that my conversion, for conversion implies a change; call it rather my confession."

Children Are a Gift from Jehovah

It is now recognized that among no other nation of ancient civilization had the family so high and essential a place as among the Hebrews. With the Greeks and

Romans, for instance, the family was in the background and the state first; but among the Hebrews it was the basis of its entire social and political life. Hebrew government originated within the family, and the clan, tribe and nation are but its extensions. The family determined the social customs, made laws, administered justice, and maintained the divine worship. A man's influence depended upon the respect that his family inspired. Marriage accordingly had for its purpose to increase the legitimate number of the family. Hence childlessness was a calamity; it made the Hebrew woman exclaim, like Rachel, Give me children, or else I die. On the other hand, it was felt that children are a gift from Jehovah; and that blessed is the man that has his quiver full of them; for they will hold their own, when they parley with their enemies at the gate.

This conception of influence by numbers may be primitive and simple; but the emphasis upon the importance of the family has its higher and far-reaching consequences. It places responsibility and authority within a narrow circle that can be controlled. To keep a nation pure and strong is a task that is enough to stagger the stoutest heart. But to keep a family pure and strong is a possible task; and according to the biblical conception a nation is nothing but the aggregation of homes.—Condensed from The Biblical Ideal of the Home by Ismar J. Peritz.

A Christian Home

A home where all are closely bound together in comradeship and where selfish financial and social ambitions and personal self-indulgence are firmly resisted by the parents.

A home where the spirit of mutual helpfulness is ever present. Parents, brothers, sisters, little folks each doing his part for the family life. Each obeying the law of unselfish service for each other.

A home where there is an outreaching spirit of helpfulness and interest in the needy about us, with warm friendliness to neighbors and the town we live in and the country that we love.

A home organized by the parents to make a place for the Church and Sunday-school and Christian work.

A home where there is at least some tiny altar lamp kept burning, replenished every morning and evening by conscientious care. Such a home as that be yours and mine:—and all shall be well.—Frederick W. Palmer, in New Era Magazine.

Unchristian Christian Homes

There are parents who, while bearing the name of Christ, practise neglect of Bible reading, of religious conversation, of the habit of prayer, of regular attendance upon divine worship, of reverent discussion of divine things. Worse than such negative testimony to the unreality of religious profession, what if the boy and girl—and never were there more observant and merciless critics than those of the home circle—find their parents giving chief place, if not monopoly in their thought, to the material aspects of life?—From an Editorial in The Christian Advocate.

Parental Responsibility

"I rode along a country road with my little boy some time ago," wrote J. Wilbur Chapman. "I found that he was speaking to my friends just as I spoke to them. One man called my attention to it and said, 'It is amusing, isn't it?' To me it was anything but amusing. If my boy is to speak as I speak, walk as I walk, then God help me to walk as a Christian."

Said a religious educator recently: "I have come to the conclusion that a very large part of our educational effort in the Church schools is being wasted because we are trying to lead the children in Christian ideals which are not exemplified in the lives of their parents. The time has come for the churches to give more attention to the parents themselves, for the parents have far more influence upon their children than the churches can ever hope to have."

The Result of Parental Neglect

A correspondent asked Dr. Cadman what was the chief source of our increase in crime. Dr. Cadman answered through the New York Tribune as follows:

Parental neglect combined with wrong social ideals. When a youth is left to his own impulses, or finds himself thwarted by home influences, he is likely to consort with a group of outside rebels who scorn the codes of honesty and hard toil. The standards that govern the majority irritate and hamper him. He craves

money and what money can procure. He loathes work and the discipline it imposes. Luxury and ease flaunt themselves before his jealous eyes. He persuades himself that he is entitled to his share of the plunder. This is the raw material for a large part of our recent criminality.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Susanna Wesley, the mother of nineteen children, and how she trained them.
2. May a parent rightfully relegate to church or Church-school his responsibility for the spiritual welfare of his child?
3. How early can children be led to God?
4. An automobile has been described as "the American home." Is this inapt?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. How, do you think, was God's will revealed to Samuel? 2. What qualities for leadership had Saul? 3. What led him to attempt to kill David? 4. How and why was he a great failure?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

HOW CAN WE HONOR OUR PARENTS

Beginning the Lesson

China's Millions tells of a Christian Chinese mother whom a missionary visited when her babe was born, and who said to the missionary, "Will you pray that he may become a Samuel? I want him to be the Lord's from his birth." When the misisonary next visited the mother the boy was fourteen years old. The mother recalled to her mind her wish that he might be like Samuel, and added, "We have never gone back on that; we earnestly pray that he may be wholly the Lord's and serve him, that he may learn some trade whereby he can earn his own living, and yet have time enough to preach." That Chinese mother well knew the story about Hannah and her boy Samuel. Let us hear it.

Hannah's Dreams

She saw the courts of the temple and the form of the priest of God moving through them like a lustrous vision. Her poet-soul mirrored his image. She saw his ephod of blue with its hem of golden bells and pomegranates. She saw high upon his head the mitre of fine linen with its glistening inscription and lace of blue.

And by his side, passing between the tall pillars with their fillets of silver, through the heavy hangings of purple and scarlet, up to the golden altar of incense itself, she saw a boy, with her own deep dark eyes and Elkanah's strong mouth; a boy with a raised, rapt face breathing in the perfume of the morning oblations,—her son!

And when night fell over Mount Ephraim and the little village of Ramah lay asleep, Hannah dreamed of the hushed silence of the temple. After the evening sacrifice and the offering of incense, when the last echoes of the chanted hymn had died in the dim courts; and ere the lamp of God had gone out in the golden branching candlesticks of the Holy Place, there would be in that sacred quietness only three living souls: the spirit of Jehovah himself brooding above the Mercy Seat, old Eli, the priest of Israel, and a boy,—her son!

Surely in that mystic company his soul would be caught up into heavenly visions. Surely it would be fed with the very fires of God. So dreamed Hannah.

But through the days she thrilled and trembled at the thought of a greater pride. She saw Samuel grown, his baby beauty graven in strength. She saw him instead of old Eli in the wondrous ephod, traversing the courts of the temple, burning the sweet incense of oblation, offering with holy hands the evening sacrifice. She saw him, a man of God, judging the people righteously, swaying Israel by the word of his counsel, priest, prophet, seer,—her son!—Agnes Sligh Turnbull.

Another Mother like Hannah

If there had been an aeroplane hovering over the Belgian Congo several months ago, the observer would have seen a strange sight—thousands of black men streaming from every direction, many traveling for days over mountains, across waters to a certain town. Had the observer been near enough he would have noticed the signs of official mourning; the throngs were heavy with grief. He might even have heard the wild wailing of the death chants. Whom were they mourning, this great gathering? Was it some mighty chieftain?

Far from it. The honor was for a quiet Scotch woman whom no one of them had ever seen—the mother of their missionary. In a few paragraphs that are like searchlights across the past the son tells, in the Record of Christian Work, of God's leading their two lives.

The boy was born in the part of Scotland where the spirit of Livingstone still lives and works. In rain or shine he was sent to his Band of Hope meetings—the mother saw to that. The first foreshadowing of the unguessed future came when the boy, prowling about the docks, discovered his first black man, a ship's cook, and brought him home to dinner. That "mad meal," he declared, inaugurated their African alliance.

Then as if they might have missed the call came the warning that the boy was not made for the rigors of the Scottish climate. The terrible cough fastened upon him. Night after night the mother listened to it. She was a widow, and he was her only son. But—that cough! It was the way his father had gone. So she was led to the great surrender of her life. The two of them silently agreed not to say good-by—"only a summer smile and an upward look."

Her boy left her standing at the window. So for twenty-two years he saw her in his heart. And in those years of endless dangers for the son, of long, anguished silences for the mother, when no letters could get through, the two worked together. Uncounted times he felt the power of her prayer, shielding him in dangers, strengthening him in difficulties, sharing his loneliness and his joys.

There came a day, after twenty-two years, when they stood face to face once more. The son has no words for that meeting.

And now she has gone. The thousands of mourners have streamed back to their homes. But the spirit of that Scottish mother is still "marching on" in the great land her eyes never saw.—The Youth's Companion.

The Boy without a Home

A fine-looking young man of twenty who was in jail for stealing two automobiles and committing other offenses, was visited by Henry T. Sell and told the latter the story of his life. His father died when he was a small lad and his mother married again. The step-father refused to have the boy in his home, and the boy was set adrift. He managed to make a living, but there was no one to care for him. When he tried to go back home they would not have him. Since no one cared what he did, he thought, he became a thief, and landed in the county jail.

In telling the incident to a group of young people Dr. Sell asked: "Do you appreciate your good homes? Do you honor your fathers and mothers? When that young man in jail told me how he lost his home and how much he had wanted a good home, I thought of you boys and girls and I wanted to give you this message—to make much of your fathers and mothers and do all you can for them—they have done so much for you. In almost every case, you will find behind a delinquent boy and girl a poor home or none at all. Remember—Honor thy father and thy mother."

He Honored his Mother

"A widow in the State of Georgia had a son. She made up her mind that he should have a college education. She took in washing, and she lived in the plainest sort of way, and she finally got him through college. Her son was graduated at the top of his class. Furthermore, he took a gold medal for special excellence in his studies. When commencement day came he was the valedictorian. On that day he went to his mother and said: 'Mother, it is commencement day.' 'I know that,' said his mother. 'But, mother, I graduate today.' 'Why, of course, I know that.' 'Well, why aren't you getting ready to go to the commencement exercises?' 'Why, my son, I am not going.' 'You are certainly going,' he said. But the mother replied: 'My son, I have nothing proper to wear, and you will be ashamed of your old mother. I have nothing but an old, plain, faded shawl, and a dress that has been worn for many years, and you would be ashamed of my appearance.' 'Why, mother, ashamed of you! I owe all I have in the world to you and what is more, I won't go unless you go with me.'

"And the mother put on the plain, faded dress and the faded shawl and started down the main street to the church, and went into the building, and her son found a place for her in a good position near the graduating class, and he took his place on the platform and delivered his valedictory address, received his

diploma and his gold medal for special excellence in studies, and stepped down from that platform and went to where that lady was, where that mother was sitting in that faded shawl, and pinned the gold medal on the faded shawl and said: 'Mother, that belongs to you. You have earned it.'

"I heard only about a month ago, after having told that story around the earth, that the young man is today the president of the college where it happened."

How to Honor Parents

A young man who occupies pleasant rooms in a large city was entertaining a guest from his country home.

"You see I honor my father and mother," he said, pointing to two portraits on the walls of his room.

"You do in sentiment, Frank," answered his visitor, "but if you will forgive an old friend's speaking plainly, your principles do not honor them to the same degree. These portraits have looked down on a good many wine suppers and wasted hours. They have seen neglected the work which you came to the city to do, and your old habits of plain living and high thinking forgotten very often. Think it over, won't you?"—The Youth's Companion.

Have Parents Any Right?

The president of an old and famous girls' college, writing recently of some of the aspects of modern youth, mentioned the incident of a girl, an undergraduate, who came to him to introduce her fiancé.

"When are you going to be married?" asked the president.

"Oh, some Saturday pretty soon. We shall just run down to the City Hall," was the reply.

"Does you family know?"

"No, they're off somewhere in Europe."

So, with the nonchalance that might have fitted an agreement to play tennis, the girl disposed of a bargain to enter the most serious relation of life—a relation on which her whole future happiness and that of another person will depend.

Another person? No; rather many other persons. What of the parents who have given eighteen or twenty years of solicitous care to bringing up a daughter? What of the young man's parents, who have given as many years to raising a son? Have they no rights?

There is probably no more heart-breaking thing that can happen to a father or a mother, short of a child's death, than to have that child marry without even the courtesy of announcing his or her intention. To parents who have lived together long enough to have children of college age, marriage means something more than a hasty union influenced by the mood of a hasty moment. It means experience of trials borne in common and in sympathy; of pleasures shared; and a firm foundation of mutual confidence and esteem. Those experiences are not born in a few days or weeks, and to see a loved daughter making light of them—and a hasty, ill-considered marriage is nothing less—is like a knife in the heart.

"But I want to live my own life. It is my right!" The cry is as old as time, and as young as youth, and there have been many answers to it; but the best one came from a teacher who, in his youth, must have uttered it himself, for he chose the life that he led and lived it gloriously; and his answer was, No man liveth to himself.—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons

"Mother, Mother, I've been thinking,
What a grand world this would be
If all mothers suit their daughters
Just as well as you suit me!"

The home is the great testing place of the Christian.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. In the earliest history of the Israelites, who were the leaders? 2. Who were the leaders during the Wilderness Wanderings? 3. Who led them into Canaan? 4. What were the leaders called who ruled after Joshua? 5. Who was the first king? 6. In the title of our lesson Saul is termed a man of great possibilities who failed. Read the entire lesson assigned, and tell what were the possibilities in the man, and why he failed.

SAUL (A Man of Great Possibilities Who Failed)

GOLDEN TEXT: Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. 1 Corinthians 10.12

LESSON 1 Samuel, Chapters 8 to 11; 13; 15; 16.14-23; 19.9-12; 28; 31
DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 1

1 SAMUEL 9.15 Now Jehovah had revealed unto Samuel a day before Saul came, saying, 16 To-morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be prince over my people Israel; and he shall save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me. 17 And when Samuel saw Saul, Jehovah said unto him, Behold, the man of whom I spake to thee! this same shall have authority over my people.

25 And when they were come down from the high place into the city, he communed with Saul upon the housetop. 26 And they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called to Saul on the housetop, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad. 27 As they were going down at the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us (and he passed on), but stand thou still first, that I may cause thee to hear the word of God.

10 Then Samuel took the vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not that Jehovah hath anointed thee to be prince over his inheritance?

19.9 And an evil spirit from Jehovah was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand; and David was playing with his hand. 10 And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the spear; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the spear into the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night. 11 And Saul sent messengers unto David's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning: and Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, If thou save not thy life to-night, to-morrow thou wilt be slain.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. GOD'S WILL REGARDING SAUL REVEALED TO SAMUEL, 1 Samuel 9.15-17. In the Hebrew the verb *revealed,* as the margin of the Bible explains, means literally *uncovered the ear of,* and signified the divine Spirit's announcement to the human spirit. "The revelation which Samuel received the day before Saul's arrival, that a man of the tribe of Benjamin would come to him, whom he was to appoint king over Israel, was psychologically based on his constant prayerful, expectant reflection as to how God would establish the monarchy." (See The Historical Background.) When Samuel saw Saul he asked himself whether Saul were the Benjamite of whom he had been told, and felt assured that Saul was the man chosen of God to be the leader of his people.

"God's voice is of the heart—I do not say
All voices therefore of the heart are God's;
And to discern the Voice amidst the voices
Is that hard task that we are born to."

II. THE MEETING OF SAUL AND SAMUEL, 9.18-26. In search of his father's asses (9.1-17), Saul sought the aid of Samuel. He found him on his way to the "high place" where he was to offer sacrifice. Samuel at once set the young man's mind at rest regarding the lost animals, telling them they were found, and then awakened great expectations in Saul's heart by adding: "For whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for thee, and for thy father's house?"

In astonishment Saul answered: "Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of Israel? Wherefore then speakest thou to me after this manner?" This extravagant expression of humility was in accordance with Eastern custom, but, as Alexander Whyte thinks, it seems to be the language of a man whose heart is really touched for the time being with divine grace. It is real humility.

Recall Henry Martyn's words when he received his appointment as chaplain of the troops in India—the first step on the road to his life as missionary: "What am I, or what is my father's house, that I should be made willing, and what am I that I should be so happy and honored?"

Samuel escorted Saul and his servant to the guest chamber, evidently the room used especially for sacrificial feasts, and gave them the chief place among all that were to partake of the feast. The fact that Saul's servant as well as Saul himself was given the place of honor shows how simple were the customs of the time. As a special honor Samuel bade the cook bring to Saul the choice portion which had been set aside for him.

Then they went to Samuel's house, and on the housetop where it was coolest they talked long together. At dawn, which was the time for departure in that hot land, Samuel called to Saul, "Up, that I may send thee away."

"The spring of the day was the best time for Saul's departure. It is the best time for the new departure of each day. Both mind and body refreshed by the sleep of the past night are recreated, made anew, full of fresh energy and new hope. All things seem possible in the magic dawning of the day. One hour in the morning is worth three in the afternoon. With the dawning of each new day you are summoned like Saul by a greater than Samuel to set out upon a new stage of your mortal journey. And God claims the spring of the day for himself, for the refreshment of your soul, and for preparation for what may await you in the world" (Hugh Macmillan).

III. THE ANOINTING OF SAUL, 9.27 to 10.1. As they were leaving the city precincts, Samuel bade Saul send his servant on ahead. Then Samuel poured oil upon Saul's head and kissed him. Before this, priests had been anointed to their office, and when Saul was consecrated as king by anointing, "the monarchy was inaugurated as a divine institution standing on a par with the priesthood." Kirkpatrick reminds us that the ceremonies of this first recorded coronation are still observed in England. The anointing is performed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the kiss of homage is given by the Archbishop and bishops, and premier peer of each rank.

"Is it not that Jehovah hath anointed thee to be prince over his inheritance?" questioned Samuel. Thus he impressed Saul with the fact that it was God who had chosen him to rule, and to God, therefore, he was responsible for the way he ruled.

IV. SAUL LOSES CONTROL OF HIMSELF, 19.9-11. An evil spirit from Jehovah was upon Saul, our text reads. He was beside himself with anger. It is the oriental manner of thinking of God as the source of all things and in control of all things, and of speaking of evil as well as good coming from him, where we speak of God as permitting evil. In 2 S. 24.16, pestilence is called an angel of Jehovah.

When Dr. J. Warschauer was lecturing in England some one in his audience exclaimed that if God is responsible for the good, he must also be responsible for the evil. "He is responsible for the potentiality; not for the actuality," the lecturer replied, and then illustrated his thought in this way: If you are the cause of your child learning to read and walk, that fact does not render you responsible for his choosing pernicious books to read on his own initiative, nor for every fall he has.

A tall spear was always by the king's side, for it served as a scepter, a mark of royalty, and David was playing before him, for his music, it was hoped, would drive away the demon of melancholy that possessed Saul. Suddenly Saul attempted to slay David with his spear, but David was too quick for him; the spear was driven into the wall as David made his escape.

Saul had been told by Samuel that his kingdom should be taken from him and given to another better than he, and he looked with suspicious eyes at anyone likely to prove his successor. He became convinced that David was the man, and he attempted to render the prophecy vain by putting David to death. It became his chief aim in life, and is the theme of nine chapters of First Samuel.

Jealousy, allowed to have its way, becomes murderous. It must be conquered at the beginning. A good resolve:

"I will not be swayed by envy when my rival's strength is shown;
I will not deny his merit, but I'll strive to prove my own."

Saul sent his messengers to David's house to watch and make sure that he did

DAVID AND SAUL

From a Drawing by Simeon Solomon

And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armor bearer.—1 Samuel 16. 21

not leave during the night and to kill him on his departure in the morning. Psalm 59 is entitled "Prayer for Deliverance from Enemies. A Psalm of David. When Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him." The Psalm ends with these words:

"But I will sing of thy strength;
Yea, I will sing aloud of thy lovingkindness in the morning:
For thou hast been my high tower,
And a refuge in the day of my distress.
Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing praises:
For God is my high tower, the God of my mercy."

Michal, David's wife, warned David that he must make his escape before morning, and she let him down through the window while the messengers were watching the door. David made his escape to Samuel at Ramah, and to deceive Saul's messengers Michal put an image (teraphim) in his bed and not till Saul ordered David brought to him on his bed was the deception discovered.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

An Appraisement of the Leaders of Israel between Moses and David

It is common enough to hear men spoken of as great who are merely useful or conspicuous or even notorious, but time quickly dispels the illusion and a later generation discovers that the supposedly great man was but common clay. After the death of Moses there is a far cry till another great man appears. Men came and went and did their work, and for our comfort be it said, were useful, for they had a share in carrying forward human progress, and so moving toward the coming in of the far distant kingdom of God, but great they were not. There are indeed not a few figures of dignity and worth, and among them Gideon, a coward at first—a fighting deliverer in the end; and Samuel the king maker, a man of probity and honor and just fame; and Saul, the first king of Israel and a person of no mean achievement.—Robert W. Rogers.

Israel Becomes a Monarchy

For a long time Samuel, the greatest of all the judges of Israel, had ruled in peace. Then the Philistines once more troubled the Israelites. Moreover, it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel: and his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre and took bribes and perverted justice. The effect upon the Israelites was most disastrous. They felt the need of a strong military leader, one who would unite them as a nation and save them from the combined opposition of the Philistines. Then, too, they had long envied their neighbors who gloried in their kings, and the Israelites would be like them and have their own king. Therefore the elders came to Samuel at Ramah and demanded a king. Their request did not please Samuel. He preferred a more direct dependence of the nation upon Jehovah. He made a solemn protest, telling them what they would suffer under a king, but the people persisted.

Samuel was a true statesman; he saw that the time had come when Israel must have a king, and he yielded. Thus began the United Kingdom of Israel. Hitherto relief from enemies had been gained by spasmodic efforts, led by champions who had appeared when needed, but upon their death the tribes had lapsed each time into disunion and confusion and anarchy. Hitherto the rule of the judge had been somewhat casual. He had little opportunity to impart his counsel unless it was sought by the people. He was in authority in a time of crisis, but when that was over his authority waned. Now the government was to be more systematic and orderly. The king was a king at all times and for life. Moreover, he and his court were supported by the people, and he had prestige and power.

The Regal period of the Hebrew nation began with Saul who may have been made king about 1030 B.C., and lasted about four hundred and fifty years, until the exile of Judah. The United Kingdom lasted a hundred years; the Divided Kingdom, two hundred and thirteen years; and the Kingdom of Judah one hundred and thirty-four years longer.

Saul's home was at Gibeah, not far from Ramah, and at Ramah he met Samuel.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

A FAILURE THAT MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN

Beginning the Lesson

If you were born to honor, show it now;
If put upon you, make the judgment good
That thought you worthy of it.

These words of Shakespeare naturally come to one's mind when reading about the high honor put upon the young Benjamite Saul. He was to be the leader of his people, the first king to rule over them. What avenues of opportunity opened before him, what power for good, what a chance to build up a new and strong and God-fearing nation!

In the beginning of his career he seems a man of great possibilities, likely to prove worthy of his great honor. He was endowed by nature with gifts and graces, goodly to look upon, tall and strong, every inch a king. And he had many admirable qualities. He was a dutiful son, courteous to Samuel, modest in his estimate of self. In the beginning of his reign he showed courage, military skill, promptness to act, fine leadership. He freed the city of Jabesh-gilead from the Ammonites and successfully waged war with other enemies.

Soon, however, he showed his unfitness to rule, for he became arrogant. His motto when first we hear of him might have been, "God and not I," for when he conquered the Ammonites he said, "*Jehovah* hath wrought deliverance in Israel." But when he gained the victory over the Amalekites his motto had become "I and God," for, as Samuel told him, he rejected the word of Jehovah and he did with the spoil as he chose. His behavior at this time recalls the story told of Ethan Allen, the hero of Ticonderoga. He was present at church when the victory was the minister's theme. After listening for some time as the minister ascribed all the glory to God, the general arose and remarked, "Please, Parson, I was there, too." "Sit down, thou presumptuous man," was the stern parson's rebuke.

Next the demon of Jealousy mastered Saul and led him on to ruin. He lost all control of himself. It became "I, and not God" with him, for he had no thought of God. He thought only of killing David, whom he regarded as his rival. Toward the end of his life he cried out in bitter remorse, "Behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly."

When Frederick William IV of Germany was raging one day over a servant's neglect, Queen Elizabeth looked around the room where they were until he asked what she was looking for. "I'm looking for the King," she quietly answered. The king was silenced, for he realized that he had been acting in an unkingly manner. We now look in vain for the king in Saul. He might have made a great king if he had governed himself. With all his possibilities, he became "a ten-talent failure," as Dr. Hillis well terms him, "a self-unmade man," in the words of another preacher. "It is not the first mile-post, but the last that tells the story; not the outward bound steed, but the one on the home-stretch that we note as victor."

How Saul's Failure Might Have Been Prevented

The center of Saul's life became himself; from this center grew his jealousy and hatred, his murderous thoughts and his madness. There was no room in his heart for God, and God left him to himself. He could not brook the equality or pre-eminence of Samuel, and the prophet ceased to visit and aid him. Because David was a greater man than himself, he drove him out from the kingdom and spent long years in hunting him from place to place. Had Saul been a man like Samuel, devoted to God and to his country, rather than to the absorbing pursuit of what he deemed his own interests, he would have rejoiced in David's successes, and, after a peaceful life with David as his counsellor and helper, he might have foreseen without bitterness that David would be established on his throne and Jonathan would be "next unto him," as his unselfish son had expected because it was God's plan for the kingdom. Instead, after a life of strife and bitterness and frenzied madness, he ended his life on the field of battle by his own hand.

A traveler in Palestine was greatly impressed by the Dead Sea as a picture of selfishness. "There it lies," he said, "and with wide open mouth swallows the whole of the fresh water of the Jordan and all the snows of Hermon, and yet it is not a whit sweeter or larger for it. The Sea of Galilee receives the river Jordan and passes it along. The Dead Sea receives but gives not. It sends out not one

rill to gladden or refresh the waste around it. It is a picture of the selfish man. He takes, but never gives. He grasps all, but only for himself, and, like selfish Lot, loses all." Can you not see Saul in this picture?

"The radius of a man's life will depend on its center." The one who is self-centered has his thoughts fixed on a very small object and his view of life is narrowed to what concerns that object. The way out of this small circle into the larger life is given in this brief prayer of Whittier's:

Change the dream of me and mine
To the truth of Thee and Thine.

How Saul Might Have Been Redeemed

The poet Browning in his beautiful poem entitled Saul, offers excuses for the poor king and sets himself the task of showing how he might be redeemed. David is the instrument of redemption. It is the words of David to which we listen. He tells how at the bidding of Abner he came with his harp to play before the distraught king; and how he sang songs of the sheepfolding, of the reaper, of the carrying a man to his last resting place, and then the song of the bridal and the song of the Levites as they went to worship in the temple, and of the joy of living. Next he sang of the glory of the king, of all he had achieved, of the honor among men in which he was held, and of the glory of Saul's soul, and pictured him ending his life triumphantly, with the affection of all his subjects. As he sings thus Saul's mood vanishes, and he is himself again, and sitting down upon the tent floor he lays his hand lovingly upon the head of the singer. A great yearning fills David's soul.

How Thomas Shepard Overcame his Jealousy

Thomas Shepard was an English Puritan, a Pilgrim Father, and the Founder of Harvard. He had, it seems, a brilliant ministerial neighbor. And his neighbor's sermons were printed on Saturdays in the New England Gazette. So, for that matter, were Shepard's. But his neighbor's sermons read well, and were popular. Shepard's read but indifferently, and were despised. And on one memorable Saturday a particularly brilliant and clever sermon appeared in the Gazette. Everybody read it, everybody talked of it, everybody praised it. And the praise of his neighbor was like fire in the bones and like gravel in the teeth of poor Thomas Shepard. It was gall and wormwood to his very soul. That Saturday the spirit of the old Puritan passed through the Garden of Gethsemane. When midnight came it found him still prostrate before God on the floor of his study. His whole frame was convulsed in an agony of sweat and tears, whilst his brilliant neighbor's clever sermon was still crushed and crumpled between his clasped hands. He wrestled, like Jacob, until the breaking of the day. He prayed until he had torn all bitterness and jealousy and hatred and ill-will out of his heart. And then, with calm and upturned face, he craved a blessing on his neighbor and on his neighbor's clever sermon. Time has taken good care to vindicate Shepard. He is the friend of all of us, whilst we do not even know his neighbor's name.—F. W. Boreham, in The Luggage of Life.

Discipline, Not Sympathy Needed

I suppose there is nothing that people who are at all careful realize more keenly than their defects of temper, but they rarely show much zeal in the matter of self-correction. There really is no reason whatever for allowing one's temper to get the upper hand of one. It is perfectly possible for any sane human being of adult years to control himself at least outwardly. If one cannot, one is insane. There is no need of going to pieces nervously and disturbing the household or the office and putting everyone else in a state of nervous strain. The proof of the statement is that we do not do it unless we feel that we can do it with impunity. The man who rages about an office and swears at his employees manages to hold himself in under much more provoking circumstances at a meeting of a board of directors; just as a child who will cry, and howl, and kick the furniture in the home, will not think of doing anything of the kind in the schoolroom. We can always manage self-control when we feel strongly enough that self-control is to our own interest. It is not necessary to waste much sympathy on people with uncontrolled tempers. What they need is discipline.—J. G. H. Barry.

Genuine Self-Control

To most people self-control means the control of appearances and not the control of realities. This is a radical mistake.

If a man is ugly to me, and I want to knock him down, and refrain from doing so simply because it would not appear well, and is not the habit of the people about me, my desire to knock him down is still a part of myself, and I have not controlled myself until I am absolutely free from that interior desire. As long as I am in hatred to another, I am in bondage to my hatred; and if, for the sake of appearances, I do not act or speak from it, I am none the less at its mercy, and it will find an outlet wherever it can do so without debasing me in the eyes of other men more than I am willing to be debased.—Annie Payson Call.

Subjects for Bible Class Discussion

1. Saul as a psychological study.
2. The evil and the good of monarchy.
3. He who is able to conquer others has force, but he who is able to control himself is mighty.—Laotzus Tao.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What is the most famous story of friendship between two men, other than that of David and Jonathan? 2. What is your definition of friendship? 3. How does one win friends? 4. What is the basis of true friendship? 5. How does one keep friends? 6. What does Shakespeare say should be done with one whose friendship has been proved? 7. What does he confess who says that he has few friends? 8. Note the opportunities that come to you this week to prove yourself a worthy friend of others.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

A MAN OF GREAT POSSIBILITIES WHO FAILED

Beginning the Lesson

Saul was physically fit for leadership. He was kingly in appearance, towering head and shoulders above those around him, and "goodly to look upon." He had personal qualities of a high order. He had proved himself a dutiful son, faithful in carrying out his father's orders, and only he who has learned how to obey is fit to give orders to others. He had seen visions and dreamed dreams—if we may deduce this from Samuel's reference to all that was in his heart: he had meditated long upon his country's affliction, had believed in Israel's great destiny, and had longed to do what he could to further that destiny.

When suddenly the opportunity came, and he learned that God had chosen him to be the leader of his people, he showed a modest estimate of himself in his words to Samuel. He was not a braggart, for after being anointed by Samuel he returned home and told about the finding of the last animals but said not a word about the great honor that had come to himself. When the time came to make him king he hid among the baggage, so unassuming, self-distrustful was he. He showed great self-control when at his coronation some "worthless fellows" brought him no present as was expected, thereby indicating that they "despised him." Instead of resenting such treatment he left the future and his own deeds to justify him.

His first deed as king proved his courage and established his renown as a warrior, when he promptly led an attack against the enemy and won the victory. The people in their gratitude would have put to death the men that had opposed them, but Saul showed a magnanimous spirit and ascribed to God the victory: "There shall not a man be put to death this day," he declared, "for today Jehovah hath wrought a deliverance in Israel."

Saul was a young man of promise, a king of great possibilities. As we follow his history, however, we shall see that the fair promise of a just reign lived in the fear of God was not fulfilled. He had a fine chance to "make good," and yet he has gone down in history as a great failure. "Why?

The Cause of Saul's Downfall

I have heard that a man at the head of a London business firm was beside himself with anger because he missed a train and an important business engagement. The office clock had been too slow and had been the cause of his failing to reach

the station on time. Losing all control of himself, the man rushed back to the office, seized the big clock, and dashed it down the stone stairway. Probably he had done just such things as a boy. Had it been a man instead of a clock who had belated him, might not such utter loss of self-control have led that man of affairs in his blind fury to hurl the offender to his death?

Saul was the respected head of the Israelite nation. He had many good qualities, but self-control was not one of them. His life is a tragedy, the tragedy of a man capable of nobility of character and of great service to his kingdom but not having himself in control. The tragic ruin of a promising life is most pathetic. In the chapter which follows this lesson we read that "his anger was kindled," and so fierce was the flame that he reviled Jonathan's mother, his own wife, tried to kill Jonathan, his own son, because Jonathan was taking David's part.

"Behold, I have Played the Fool"

Saul said this in a moment of mental and spiritual illumination. Once again his life had been in the hands of David, and David had refused to slay him. Moreover, he had expostulated with Saul as to the unreasonableness and wickedness of his persistent persecution. Then suddenly the whole truth flamed out upon this man. He saw himself and his actions in the light of actual truth, and under the impulse of the revelation, he told the truth about himself as he said, "I have played the fool." In these words we have a perfect autobiography. In them the whole life-story of this man is told. Their interpretation is found in the whole narrative, and the explanation of that narrative is contained in them. From the very beginning Saul had failed. To him there had been given the greatest opportunities; and his way had been made easy for him by all the resources placed at his disposal. There had been given to him the Spirit of God, the friendship of Samuel, and the devotion of men whose hearts God had touched. He had so acted that the Spirit had departed from him; Samuel had been unable to help him; and the hearts of his people had been turned away from him. The whole secret was that he had leaned to his own understanding, had failed to obey, and had become the evil-tempered man he was, mastered by hatred, and fighting against God. He verily had played the fool. And so every man plays the fool when he forgets that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.—G. Campbell Morgan.

How Ivan Learned to Control his Temper

I have known Ivan to stoop down to put something into the little safe in the back office and, rising too quickly, bump his head. Instantly his teeth would clench, his face would be transfigured with passion, he would draw back the proper distance and give the placid safe a violent kick in the face. It was, of course, simply absurd: just because he had a bumped head was no reason in the world why he should set out to lame his foot. His kick in no way revenged him, and, anyway, the safe was in no way to blame. It had not put itself in his way, his head had been the aggressor, and the only blame rested on Ivan himself. Usually dexterous enough, he had been this time a little clumsy and his kick did nothing to cure that.

But if you ask me why Ivan behaved in such a childish fashion—well, why do any of us ever get angry? And when we do, don't most of us act rather foolish? But Ivan's case was, I admit, an extreme one. When he got mad, he simply went mad—almost as a dog does, and in the first paroxysm he would fling the thing that was nearest his hand or tongue, be it a chair, shovel, foul name or oath.

In confidential moments Ivan and I have talked about his temper, for he admitted he had it as freely as he would have admitted he had a cold. Only, one recovers from a cold, and he had no hope of ever recovering from his temper.

One August afternoon Herman, the new stock boy, called me. "Quick," he said, "Ivan's got a fit or something." I reached the scene just as Ivan staggered to his feet, pointing, and his white face and outstretched arm told most of the story.

Jimmy, the elevator boy, had been wont to find a perilous excitement in stirring up Ivan, as one might poke a stick into a hornet's nest, and then making a swift get-away. He had shot a cloth board along the counter on which Ivan was piling some tiny boxes that he was checking. They flew in every direction and Ivan in one direction—straight after Jimmy. Jimmy could run like a rabbit, and his next spring would have landed him (as he thought) safe in his waiting car, when Ivan choked and stumbled. Even in his wrath he had seen what Jimmy's

mirth had made him blind to. The door of the elevator shaft stood open, one of the boys had run the car up to the floor above and Jimmy's next step would have dropped him into the basement eleven stories below.

No one of us, I suspect, can ever know the burst of sudden soul strength that Ivan put forth to jerk his frothing temper back on its haunches and throw it flat, but the imperative demand of that crisis did more for him than all my preaching and all his resolutions, for in that tragic moment when it was within a hair's breadth of murder, his temper learned that, long as it had tyrannized over him, he was, after all, its master; and, what is more important, *Ivan* learned that he was its master.

Ten years have passed since that day and he still has his temper. I think he will always have it. But it no longer drives him: he drives it—with a curb bit.—Unknown.

The Use and Value of Self-Control

Self-control is spoken of as one of the fruits of the Spirit; that is, one of the things that result from letting God have our hearts.

Self-control—what is the use and value of it? I was reading the other day about the explosion of a locomotive on the Rio Grande Railroad. It was drawing a heavy train, and, suddenly, without any warning, it burst.

What made it burst? "Why, the steam that was in it," you say. Yes, it was the steam. And what a pity that there was steam in the boiler, wasn't it? If it hadn't been for the steam the locomotive would have been perfectly safe. Yes; and perfectly useless.

The locomotive burst because it lost self-control. The boiler is made very strong on purpose to keep the steam in control, so that the engineer may turn it into the cylinders, where it does the work of a hundred giants, pushing the piston back and forth and turning the big wheels.

There is steam in our boilers, too. There is that power which we call temper. Then there is the power of very strong desire for anything. It is perfectly right that boys and girls should have strong desires, and that they should have tempers; the trouble is, you know, when the locomotive boiler bursts. What results then? Why, there is a great splurge and splutter, and the locomotive is torn all to pieces. That is what happens sometimes when a boy loses self-control. It isn't always wrong for a boy to get mad; there are some things that ought to make a boy mad. But sometimes he loses self-control, and uses angry words, and maybe blows come, and he loses power. He ought to keep his temper to do temper's good work. And when a girl wants something very much—Oh! very, very much, the danger is that there will be some exploding words and somebody will be hurt.

We sometimes hear people speak as if all temper were a bad thing. A man without a temper makes me think of one of these horses that just goes jogging, jogging down the street, looking as though he really needed a post to lean against. I wouldn't enjoy that kind of a horse! I want a horse that is full of spirit and life—but well-trained; so that, with the very finest action, he goes along, moving his limbs with grace, as though there were springs in them, and he would go straight on and on and never tire.

I think that is the way God wants us to be: full of spirit and life, and sometimes with temper. But look out that the boiler doesn't burst! We want plenty of steam, but no explosion.—Frank T. Bayley, in Little Ten-Minutes.

Sentence Sermons

Who wears a crown must fear to see
Both crown and kingdom slip away:
Who rules himself a king shall be,
Secure unto his dying day.—Arlo Bates.

It is for service you are here, not for a throne.—Thomas à Kempis.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What beautiful story of friendship between two women have we had this Quarter? 2. Which do you admire the more, David or Jonathan? 3. Why did Saul try to break up their friendship? 4. What is a friend? 5. What is the difference between a friend and an acquaintance? 6. Between a friend and a comrade? 7. How is friendship shown? 8. What do you do for your friends? 9. When did Jesus seek help from his friends and they failed him? 10. How does Jesus say we can prove our friendship for him? (John 15.14.)

JONATHAN AND DAVID (A Noble Friendship)

GOLDEN TEXT: He that maketh many friends, doeth it to his own destruction;
But there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.
Proverbs 18.24

LESSON 1 Samuel 18.1-4; 19.1-7; Chapter 20; 2 Samuel 1.17-27
DEVOTIONAL READING 1 Corinthians 13.4-13

1 SAMUEL 18.1 And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. 2 And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house. 3 Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. 4 And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his apparel, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.

20.14 And thou shalt not only while yet I live show me the lovingkindness of Jehovah, that I die not; 15 but also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever; no, not when Jehovah hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth. 16 So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, *saying*, And Jehovah will require it at the hand of David's enemies.

17 And Jonathan caused David to swear again, for the love that he had to him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

32 And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore should he be put to death? what hath he done? 33 And Saul cast his spear at him to smite him; whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to put David to death. 34 So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no food the second day of the month; for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.

41 And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of *a place* toward the South, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded. 42 And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of Jehovah, saying, Jehovah shall be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed, for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.

2 SAMUEL I 25 How are the mighty fallen
in the midst of the battle!
Jonathan is slain upon thy high places.
26 I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan:
Very pleasant hast thou been unto me:
Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women.
27 How are the mighty fallen,
And the weapons of war perished!

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE FIRST MEETING OF THE TWO FRIENDS, 1 Samuel 18.1-4. David's victory over Goliath not only brought about the defeat of the Philistines, but gained for him a position at court and the devoted friendship of Jonathan, Saul's son. Abner, the captain of the army, brought the victorious champion into the king's presence and Saul would not let him return to his father's house. Jonathan was present at David's coming, and at once a beautiful friendship sprang up between the two. They made a covenant, exchanging presents. Nothing was too good for his new-found friend, Jonathan thought, for he loved David as his own soul; slipping off his own robe he gave that and all his apparel, even to his sword, bow and girdle, to David. It was to David's interest to love Jonathan, but far from Jonathan's interest to love David. Yet Jonathan, as George Matheson says, was an absolute spendthrift for the sake of love. "From beginning to end, the love of Jonathan for David was a disrobing, a divestiture. In every act of friendship, in every deed of devotion, in every outstretching of a protective hand, he was stripping himself of a royal garment."

"The prime gain of friendship is just the knowledge of a noble soul. That was what Jonathan felt. David won Jonathan's heart on the day when he stood revealed in all the riches of his regal nature—that day when Goliath was slain. David was proved to be the grandest man of Israel, fullest of patriotism and beauty, courage and skill, and all his qualities were adorned and set off by his humility. As you read the subsequent history of that friendship you are very apt to think that David was the gainer, for Jonathan was a perfect miracle of tenderness, and was never weary of sacrificing himself for the interests of his friend; yet I conceive that that would be false judgment. I am certain of this, that Jonathan would not have agreed to it.

David was by far the more splendid nature, and I believe that is what determines which is the gainer in a friendship. It is the man who has most in himself to give who gives most, not the man who has most of what is external to give" (James Stalker).

"Convey thy love to thy friend as an arrow to the mark, to stick there, not as a ball against the wall, to rebound back to thee; that friendship will not continue to the end that is begun for an end" (Quarles).

II. THE COVENANT BETWEEN DAVID AND JONATHAN, 1 Samuel 20.9-23. After David escaped murder at Saul's hands (our lesson last week) he returned from Ramah and sought Jonathan. Jonathan could not believe David's declaration that the king was seeking David's life, and he solemnly promised his friend that he would sound his father on the morrow and if he found the latter's intentions were evil toward David, he would let David know and send him away. Solemnly also he bade David not only show lovingkindness to him but not to harbor ill against his father's house. Thus Jonathan made a covenant with David, saying, "And Jehovah will require it at the hands of David's enemies." "'David's enemies' are a euphemism for David himself. Jonathan shrinks from invoking retribution on his friend or suggesting in so many words the possibility of his breaking the covenant" (Dummelow).

"Mental prayer is nothing else in my opinion than a treaty of friendship with our Lord, often speaking alone with him who, we know, loves us" (St. Teresa).

III. THE PLAN AGREED UPON BY THE TWO FRIENDS, 1 Samuel 20.18-23.

IV. JONATHAN'S ANGER AT THE PROOF OF HIS FATHER'S MURDEROUS HATRED OF DAVID, 1 Samuel 20.24-34. Throughout the history we are shown Jonathan's devotion to his unfortunate father. Jonathan held the office afterwards known as that of "the king's friend." "My father doeth nothing either great or small, but that he discloseth it unto me; and why should my father hide this thing from me? It is not so," he had declared to David when the latter assured him that Saul was bent upon putting him (David) to death. But when David absented himself from court according to their plan, and Jonathan made excuses for him to his father, Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan and in violent words he upbraided him for his friendship for David. "As long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established nor thy kingdom," he told him. And then, beside himself with passion, he cried, "Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die."

Saul was not a comfortable man to live with at any time. No one likes to live near a mountain that is liable to sudden volcanic eruption. No one enjoys living with another who, on the slightest provocation, or no provocation at all, is liable to shower one with angry words.

To Jonathan, if to anyone, Saul's frenzy was amenable, and Jonathan essayed to calm him with mild words saying, "Wherefore should he be put to death? What hath he done?" These questions only served to arouse Saul's anger to such a pitch that he cast his spear at Jonathan to kill him. Further evidence was scarcely needed to convince Jonathan of his father's intentions toward David! Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger.

"His generous friendship no cold medium knows,
Burns with one love, with one resentment glows" (Pope).

This is the only time when there was a break between Jonathan and Saul. Jonathan stayed with his father, shared his lot in war, and "in death they were not divided." Jonathan was grieved for David because his father had done him shame. Shame had been done to Jonathan by his father's angry, insulting words, verse 30, but Jonathan overlooked that; but when shame was done to David by his father's public accusation of treasonable designs, verse 31, Jonathan grieved over that and over Saul's frenzied purpose to take David's life.

V. JONATHAN BEFRIENDS DAVID, 1 Samuel 20.35-42. In the morning Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed (as told in verses 18-23), and took with him a lad young enough not to suspect their plan. Jonathan shot arrows and sent the lad to get them. While the lad was running after them, Jona-

than shot an arrow that flew over his head and fell beyond him. Then Jonathan cried, "Make speed, haste, stay not"—words which were spoken to the lad, but were intended for David, who was in hiding. On the lad's return with the arrows Jonathan gave him his bow and quiver and directed him to return to the city with them, for he was eager to have a chance to talk freely with David.

A Moorish Chieftain Bowing before the King of Spain on the Latter's Visit to Morocco

From his hiding-place to the south of the stone Ezel (verse 18), David arose and showed great respect to Jonathan, the king's son, by falling on his face to the ground, and bowing himself three times. They kissed and wept together.

"Friendship's one infallible test is that it draws nearer to its object in the time of trouble."

"Go in peace," said Jonathan, uttering the customary farewell phrase, "since we have taken a solemn oath saying, Jehovah shall be between us (not to separate, but to draw closer together) and between our posterity." David departed to begin his lonely life as a fugitive, hunted from place to place, and Jonathan returned to the city. Only once, and then by stealth, do we hear of the friends meeting again, 1 S. 23.16.

VI. DAVID'S LAMENT OVER JONATHAN'S DEATH, 2 Samuel 1.17-27. Saul and Jonathan had fallen in battle, and in an address to Israel David lamented their death. His dirge is called the "Song of the Bow," for it celebrates them as fallen heroes. In our printed verses the climax is reached in his expression of sorrow over his loss of Jonathan's love. "The weapons of war," verse 27, are the heroes considered as instruments of battle.

"The artistic skill with which the successive thoughts of this ode are introduced is equal to the beauty and passionate tenderness of the thoughts themselves. The lament over Israel's glory slain, the picture of exulting foes, the imprecation on the spot of ground that witnessed and, as it were, permitted the misfortune, the praise of the military exploits of the heroes, their oneness, their strength, the appeal to the women, the picture of Jonathan's deep and faithful love—these are all exquisitely expressed and connected" (Schaff).

"There came back to David the recollection of those bright days when he dwelt peacefully as Saul's son and Jonathan's brother, and his heart welled into tenderness as he recalled the amiable traits which not only his dear

friend Jonathan, but even Saul in his better moments, had manifested. Eulogies over the dead often seem insincere or exaggerated to those who know not the memories awakened."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him and gave it to David, 18.4. It was most unusual for an eastern prince to give away any personal article. When Haman made his request for "royal apparel which the king useth to war, and the horse that the king rideth upon" (Esther 6.8), he was asking much for the one whom the king delighteth to honor. "When the two young men entered into their covenant of life-friendship, they sealed it in a very characteristic eastern way, by the giving and receiving of garments. It was typical of that surrender of himself in love and service which Jonathan that day made."

He said unto him, Thou son of a perverse, rebellious woman, 20.30. This is a favorite oriental mode of abuse. There are some traces of this form of abuse, in principle, among the least refined portion of our own population; but in the East no man is too high or too refined to be above it. Even a son will abuse his brother, by casting contumely upon his mother regardless of the fact that she is also his own mother, and whom, as such, he venerates and loves.—Kitto.

They kissed one another and wept with one another, 20.41. Men in the East are more emotional than Westerners and they do not deem it unmanly to give expression to their emotion. The custom of embracing and kissing among men is not uncommon even in Germany and France today, as well as in the Orient.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Jonathan is heir to the throne. David is his rival. He knows how popular David has grown, and how true are his father's words that David, not he himself, will succeed to the throne. He need only not befriend David, and David will be slain and his own way to the throne of Israel will be made secure. Must there not have been a struggle in Jonathan's soul before he could be content to take second place in everything? Could your pupils be so loyal to a friend who was certain to spoil their best chances in life? Lead them to use their imagination and put themselves in Jonathan's place.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE FRIEND WHO DOES NOT FAIL

Beginning the Lesson

Where in the Old Testament can we find a more attractive character, more full of strength and charm, more high-minded and unselfish, than Jonathan? The interests of his people, of his father, and of his friend, filled his thoughts, and there was no room in that great heart of his for self. Therein lies his charm. His fame depends very little upon what he did as the King's son, and almost wholly upon his loyal love for David his friend.

Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown, in writing about David, comments upon the fine friendship of a man for a man, or a woman for a woman. For a man to fall in love with some beautiful woman is as easy as falling off a log, he thinks. "But where a man loves a man in an unsullied, unselfish friendship until his soul is knit with the soul of that man in an interlacing and interlocking of interest, then you have that harder, rarer form of human relationship which is rich with promise.

"The young chap who is never quite happy with his fellows, who must always have some adoring young woman present in order to be content, is not quite all there. He is a 'softy.' He is lath and plaster where there should be quartered oak. He has more sentiment than principle; he has less muscle and more fat than go to the make-up of a virile manhood. The absence of the glamour and mystery which enters into all attachments between those of opposite sex clears the air for the manifestation of some of those fine forms of fidelity and devotion which belong to friendship at its best.

"Jonathan, as the Crown Prince, had the least to gain and the most to lose by protecting the life and ministering to the well-being of this friend who might one day aspire to the throne. He made his affection a thing resplendent by its sheer unselfish-

ness. He saw that David might increase while he would decrease, yet even so the sky of his affection was unclouded by a single touch of jealousy. How great is that love which envieth not!

"And David in turn made his own adequate response to this magnanimous interest. He showed himself in his whole bearing a man worthy of the friendship of a prince of the blood. Heaven be praised for men who can find joy and satisfaction in the friendship of their fellows."

A Friend Loveth at All Times; And a Brother Is Born for Adversity

Ovid in exile tells you that "while you are in prosperity you will be able to count many friends, but if sad days come, you will be alone. See how the doves build in the new towers while the old roof has not a single bird. You will never see ants filing along to an empty storehouse, nor friendship journeying toward one who has lost his wealth. As the shadow attends only when the sun is shining brightly and goes away at the coming of a cloud, thus the crowd will follow while one's day is bright, but when clouds come it will disappear." Although it has been the sad experience of many to lose when the clouds came those whom they counted their friends in bright days, Ovid's words are none the less untrue. The friends who desert one in adversity were never genuine friends in prosperity; they were like those followers who never truly loved Jesus but followed him only for the loaves and fishes.

Pine-Log Friendship

There is a little book called Brown Studies, written by George Hepworth. The hero is spending a winter in the Adirondack Mountains. One night he asks the guide to make a fire for him. The fire lasts a couple of hours and goes out. While he sits pondering over the smoking ashes the guide enters. "Your fire is nearly out," the man remarks, as though it were some fault of the guide's. " 'Twas dry pine," he responds. "Well, what of it?" "Nothing, sir, except that it's always so with pine. It catches quickly, it blazes up quickly, it's awful hot while it lasts, but it goes out quick and leaves you in a lurch. Shall I bring in another armful?" "No, John, I'm going to bed. Good night."

But the man sits an hour longer gazing at the flickering embers. "Quick to come, hot while it lasts, and quick to go"—he repeats the words again and again, for they seem to have a subtle meaning that he cannot at first fathom. They ring in his ears like a village church-bell tolling for a funeral. "It is ever so with pine-log friendship. It is quick to come hot while it lasts, and quick to go," finally he says.

To Have Friends, One Must Be a Friend

Through one of my clubs passed a citizen of note one day. He has had everything this world can give him—wealth, position, power, respect—but he has few intimate friends. He has never been known to open his heart to another individual.

He walked through that room, filled with men he knew, as though nobody were there. He recognized a nod of greeting with a nod. He answered every "Hello" that was given to him, but that's all there was to it. If you had been away for six months or more, he would not have gone a step out of his way to welcome you home. Coming face to face with you perhaps he would express pleasure at seeing you again. But you still would feel that if he could have passed you without speaking he would have done so. He lacks interest in others.

I've known that man for years. I know that he values friends, and that he wishes he had more of them. But he probably never will, for he hasn't a genuine interest in people. It is too late now for him to start to win them. He has built up for himself a reputation for coldness and reserve and indifference. People expect him to be distant. Any attempt he made to be hail-fellow-well-met would be looked upon as insincere.

Somebody got to a man of this type in a certain big business in Detroit. He always had kept himself aloof. Day after day he entered that office without ever saying good morning to anyone. The meddling somebody told this impersonal employer that he ought to be friendlier with the boys and girls in the plant. "It would do you and them a lot of good if you walked among them occasionally and talked to them," he said. "They're all afraid of you. They think you're the Big Bear that is ready to gobble them up."

"I've never had the knack of making friends," said he, "and I'm sorry I've given the wrong impression. I'll try my best to treat the boys a little better from now on."

He started the very next morning. As he stepped into the elevator, he noticed in the car the foreman of one of the departments. "Good morning, Jim," he said. "This is a beautiful day."

The reply was not what he expected. Jim looked him straight in the eyes and said: "Mr. ——, I've worked for this institution a little over twenty-five years now, and I've done fairly well for the company and my family without ever having you say 'Good morning' to me. You don't need to start now." And with that he stepped out of the car and went to work.

It was too late. You can't slight a man for twenty-five years and then decide to turn over a new leaf and greet him like a brother. You may mean to be friendly, but the other man will suspect your motive.

To have friends, a man must first be a friend. He who has many friends has been a friend to many.

He who comes to the end of life's road with a few or no devoted friends has only himself to blame.—Edgar A. Guest.

The Friendship of God

When we read this classic story of friendship we ask ourselves whether, in this day and time, such friendships are still possible. Men are said to love their homes in a way unknown to their ancestors. There is no doubt that men now love the pursuit of power and wealth more keenly than in old days. Yet the old text stands: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." We have but to read or listen to the moving stories of gallantry and devotion displayed in the World War to know that one of the strongest of the human emotions is that of friendship. A man, seeing his friend wounded or in danger, risks his own life without a thought.

Both in war and in peace, friendship yields sure rewards. But nowhere is friendship more close or more satisfying than when it has in it a religious element. Every type of human friendship is derived from that high interpretation which bases it on the friendliness of God. In the Book of Exodus we read: "And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." Religion at its best accepts the universe as friendly. "Henceforth," said the Lord Jesus, "I call you not servants, but I have called you friends."

This ascribes the tenderest of human relationships to the Founder of our faith. To meet him on such a basis is not only to confirm the friendship of God but to lay an indestructible foundation for brotherhood among ourselves. A friendly God establishes firmly the foundation of human friendship at its noblest. The Christian religion raises the ideal of human friendship to its loftiest and most enduring height.—The Youth's Companion.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. What friendship is and does. Friendship is a strong and habitual inclination of two persons to promote the good and happiness of each other.—Addison. Our chief want in life is someone who shall make us do what we can.—Emerson. The only way to have a friend is to be one.—Emerson. If thou knowest thou hast a friend whom thou well canst trust, go oft to visit him; for with brushwood overgrown and with high grass is the way that no one treads.—The Edda.

2. Famous friendships.

3. How to keep friends. Joubert made a good suggestion: "When my friend is blind in one eye, I look at him in profile."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Read the book of Amos. 2. When did Amos prophesy? 3. What three other prophets belong to that century? 4. What do we know about the life and character of Amos? 5. About the times in which he lived? 6. What particular sins did Amos denounce? 7. What is the context of our text from the second chapter of Amos?

TOPICS FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

FINDING WORTHY FRIENDS

Beginning the Lesson

When two boys want to be together all the time and share all their work and fun together, some one is sure to speak of them as David and Jonathan: why? David

and Jonathan were chums and much more than chums. Their love for each other has been the wonder and at the same time the ideal of the world. A David and Jonathan friendship is one of the finest things the world knows.

When did David and Jonathan first meet? What did David see in Jonathan, and what did Jonathan see in David? They were brought into close contact by their duties in the army and at the court, and they came to know each other well. They were both soldiers and popular heroes. They had the same high aims about building up the kingdom, making it strong, defeating its enemies. All these things helped to make them friends. But the real reason for their friendship is to be found in their own natures. They were much alike. Both were generous, chivalrous, unselfish. Both were courageous, daring, lovers of adventure. Both were lovers of noble deeds. Men who had so much in common were drawn to each other—it could not be otherwise.

David
From a Statue by Michael Angelo

Their interests, however, were opposed. Their positions made them rivals for a crown. Jonathan was born to it; his father was Saul the king. David was called to it by the prophet Samuel. Yet they were friends. This rivalry of interests made theirs one of the most unique friendships in history.

They were together at the royal court for a while, and then Saul became very jealous of David. Why? How did Saul treat Jonathan because of the latter's friendship for David? What did Saul try to do to David? The fact that it was Jonathan's father who was trying to put him to death might well have chilled David's feelings for Jonathan, but it did not. What about Jonathan's love for David: do you think it was easy for Jonathan to forget his own interests and think only of David's? Could you have done that easily? Jonathan forgot himself entirely and sought to save David from Saul's murderous anger. In the choice between a friend and a kingdom, he chose the friend. And David on his part swore to be true to Jonathan. Though they were long separated, their love remained unweakened to the end.

Worth-While Friends

Are your friends all worth-while friends?

"Friends are like melons. Shall I tell you why?
To find one good you must a hundred try."

Have you tried your friend? What is your proof that he is a good friend?

You have different sorts of friends, of course. Have you a friend with whom you always have a good time, no matter what the circumstances? Can you say this of all friends? Why is there this difference?

Have you a friend to whom you always go for comfort when things go wrong with you? Why?

"Faithful are the wounds of a friend." What does that mean? Who, according to that, is your most faithful friend?

"The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel."

If you hold a piece of ribbon grass in your hand and rub it one way you find it as smooth as a piece of satin, but if you rub it the other way it is full of little prickers. So our friends "rub" us the right way or the wrong way. Have you not known how easy it is in the companionship of some friends to show only your good qualities, while in the companionship of others you are strangely tempted to be

perverse and uncomfortable, if not worse? For most people there are certain friends in whose company only noble thoughts arise. The friend who makes you desire and determine to live nobly is your best friend.

Have you consciously tried to be the friend who calls out only another's good qualities, who helps him to do and to be the best that it is possible for him to be and to do?

Thy Father's Friend

Justice Lamar of the United States Supreme Court wrote an unusual paragraph in his will. This is the way it runs:

"To my family I bequeath friendships many and numerous in the hope that they will be cherished and continued. True friendships are the most valuable of our earthly possessions, more precious than gold, more enduring than marble palaces, more important than fame. As Henry Drummond has well said, 'Friendship is the nearest thing we know to what religion is.'"

"The family that inherits much wealth is truly rich," The Youth's Companion comments, and warns that it is a legacy which must be used if it would be preserved. "Friendships cannot be locked away in safes. Like love and faith and courage, they belong to that intangible treasure of the soul that must be kept from destruction by constant service. It is not alone material things that 'rust doth corrupt.'

"How many of us have let slip through busy or careless fingers beautiful and glowing friendships? We did not mean to do it. And if that is true of our own friends, how far more true of our father's friends? Yet there have been families where friendships have passed down from father to son for several generations.

"'A man that hath friends,' the old Book of Wisdom declares, 'must show himself friendly'; and again 'Thine own friend and thy father's friend forsake not.'"

Your Best Friend

"Christ is our Friend: that means everything we need," wrote J. R. Miller in one of his books. "The consciousness that Christ is our Friend and we are his should check every evil thought, quell every bitter feeling, sweeten every emotion, and make all our life holy, true and heavenly."

And in a friendly letter Dr. Miller said: "What I want to help you to understand is that Christ is your truest and best friend. And you, being a Christian, are Christ's friend. That is, you have accepted his love, letting him into your heart, and have begun to love him in return. Religion really narrows itself down to a single statement—'Christ and I are friends.' Prayer is simply talking with Christ as you would sit down with any dear, tender, close and trusted human friend for a little talk."

A Comforting Reminder

The Youth's Companion gives an unusual conversation on a railroad train. A farmer entered the car with a basket of vegetables, and, seeing an old man whom he knew, sat down to visit with him. Their conversation interested all around.

"I've had many troubles to carry, John," at length the old man said. "I know," returned John tenderly. "I know. I reckon we all have worries enough to pull us down in this world, if it wasn't for the hope given us by our Friend who has gone on before."

"Who is that?" sharply asked a boy who had been drinking.

"Why, my dear boy, don't you know? Jesus is the one Friend above all others," answered the farmer simply.

When the farmer rose to leave soon after, his aged friend said:

"Good-by, John, I may never see you again. I'm going down hill pretty fast. But I'm glad we met, and"—his voice sinking—"I'm glad you spoke of Jesus."

Sentence Sermons

A wish for friendship is formed quickly, but not friendship.—Aristotle.

It is only the great-hearted who can be true friends; the mean and cowardly never know what true friendship means.—Charles Kingsley.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Name the twelve minor prophets. 2. Why are they called minor? 3. In what century did Amos live? 4. Where was Tekoa? 5. Where was Bethel? 6. Why did a shepherd of the Southern Kingdom go to the Northern Kingdom to warn the people there of their sins and the consequences? 7. What is the force of the two sentences of 3.8?

AMOS (A Herdsman Called of God To Be a Prophet)

GOLDEN TEXT: I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me. Isaiah 6.8

LESSON The Book of Amos

DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 55.1-7

AMOS 1 The words of Amos, who was among the herdsmen of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

7.10 Then Amaziah the priest of Beth-el, sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words. 11 For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of his land. 12 Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thou away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: 13 but prophesy not again any more at Beth-el; for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a royal house.

14 Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdsman, and a dresser of sycomore-trees: 15 and Jehovah took me from following the flock, and Jehovah said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.

2.11 And I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazirites. Is it not even thus, O ye children of Israel? saith Jehovah. 12 But ye gave the Nazirites wine to drink, and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophesy not.

3.7 Surely the Lord Jehovah will do nothing, except he reveal his secret unto his servants the prophets. 8 The lion hath roared; who will not fear? The Lord Jehovah hath spoken; who can but prophesy?

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE TIME OF AMOS' PROPHECY, 1.1. Amos was a herdsman of Tekoa (a small village of Judah), who lived in the eighth century B.C., in the reign of Uzziah, king of Judah, and Jeroboam II, king of Israel. Uzziah reigned forty-five years in Judah (782-737 B.C.), and somewhere in that reign occurred an earthquake so startling and devastating that the Judeans dated events from it, just as they often dated them from the deliverance from Egypt. It was probably 755 B.C., "two years before the earthquake," that Amos wrote his book, the first of all the prophetical books, wherefore he is called "the father of written prophecy."

"Two years before the earthquake! What an ominous beginning! But no words could better introduce the stern book of Amos. The world into which it ushers us is a world crowded with wrong of every kind—of false worship and social injustice. Such a world needed to be shaken and Amos knew that it would be. That, indeed, is the burden of his message; and already in the opening words the rumbling of the coming shock is heard. Sharp ears, however, were needed to detect it. To the average man of those days, society must have seemed stable enough, for the brilliant reign of Jeroboam the second had been marked by peace and prosperity. But not far beneath the shining surface the clear eyes of Amos saw the symptoms of rottenness and inevitable decay; and the words of his first recorded message are that Jehovah, the God of this easy-going people, would roar from his temple in Jerusalem, like a lion just before he makes his spring. The implication is that Jehovah will soon spring upon his people, to tear them in pieces; and Amos' message we might describe as the Gospel of the Lion's Roar" (J. E. McFadyen).

II. THE CLASH BETWEEN PROPHET AND PRIEST, 7.10-15. Amaziah, priest of Bethel, "a sort of Archbishop of Canterbury, if we may permit ourselves a modern comparison," sent a message to Jeroboam the king accusing Amos of treason, of predicting the death of Jeroboam by the sword and the captivity of the people. "There had been enough interference of prophets with politics in previous Hebrew history to justify Amaziah in his interpretation of Amos' threat. Elijah, and still more Elisha, had directly contributed to the downfall of the dynasty whose best-known members are Ahab and Jezebel. Therefore Amaziah, as ecclesiastical guardian of the royal interests, was thoroughly justified in dispatching his message to the king: 'the land,' as he said, 'was not able to bear all his words'—so unpatriotic, so dangerous, so monstrous were they.

"There was nothing in the message of Amos which could appeal to these people, for he was sent not to tickle their ears, but to awaken a slumbering conscience; not

to minister to vanity either national or personal, but to call men to repentance, set up new standards of righteousness and of justice, and remind men of a jealous God. Nor was there in the man's appearance aught to attract the eye and appeal to the sense of interest. He would look like a shepherd, and the hands that he stretched out in appeal or shook in warning were stained with the acrid juices of the fig, bronzed by the weather, and hardened by struggles with wild beasts. The elegant and refined people would not be willing to flock after such a man to hear a message from his lips which prated ever in solemn terms of righteousness, and sounded a constant refrain—doom, doom, doom" (Robert W. Rogers).

Then the priest turned to the prophet and in contemptuous words bade him return to his own land of Judah and there be paid for his prophesying, and never prophesy again at Bethel, for it was the king's sanctuary, and was a royal house. "'Visionary,' he calls Amos, with reference, no doubt, to the visions he has just declared (7.1-9), 'you with your staring eyes, we refuse to have our happy festival disturbed by eccentric and dangerous people like you. This is Israel, and you have no right here at our festival at all. Be off to Judah, where you came from. Your friends there will be only too glad to hear your dark and bitter words about Israel; they will pay you well for declaring that the throne of Israel will be drenched in blood, and our people swept into exile. But you are never again to come to Israel with messages of that kind,—least of all here, to Bethel; for this is the king's own sanctuary. Be gone!'" (J. E. McFadyen).

Amos could not be "downed" by any priest, and he faced him without flinching. His consciousness of his divine commission upheld him in the face of all the high priest's threats and commands, and he returned, "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son." The early prophets of Israel—Samuel and Elijah and Elisha were the king's advisers; they had an official position, as it were. The so-called sons of the prophets were professionals, men who earned their living by prophesying. Amos was not like them. As Amaziah had insinuated (verse 12): he earned his living by caring for his flocks and by dressing sycomore trees. Sycomore trees yielded fruit which would ripen only after being punctured, and to do this work was the humble and scantily remunerated task of Amos. He was not a member of a prophetic guild; he was an "inspired farmer" chosen by God to be his messenger to Israel. "And Jehovah took me from following the flock," continued Amos. He has been called a second and greater Elijah: Elijah came from the grazing district east of the Jordan; Amos from among the herdsmen of Tekoa, in the sandy uplands south of Tekoa he had pastured his flocks. "And Jehovah said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel." His words are not simply his own; he believes that they are the words of Jehovah spoken through his lips.

"The contact between God and the soul of a man is too mysterious for us, too deep for our understanding, and the mingling of human and divine in the prophetic messages too wonderful for our analysis. How the Divine Spirit operated we know not, we know only that the word declared by the prophet to that age continues in this age to declare God. But whatever the divine method in inspiration, there can be no doubt that it left Amos a man, an agent of the Divine, but not a machine, not an instrument like a steel tool without the power of thought or the expression of individuality. Amos was Amos still, though God touched him, and the message which he delivered was his own as well as God's" (Robert W. Rogers).

III. THE NECESSITY OF PROPHESYING EVIL AGAINST ISRAEL, 2.6-16. The sins with which Amos charges the Israelites are oppression of the poor, immorality and intemperance. "Incredible as it may seem to us, these vices were actually associated with the public worship of God. Women were attached to the sanctuaries, as in parts of India today, with results which can more readily be imagined than described; the sacred places so called rang with sounds of revelry, and witnessed deeds of robbery and lust. A merciful law had provided that the garment which a poor man had been obliged to pledge must be returned to him before sunset; but in these sanctuaries, where of all places justice ought to have been done, the law was shamelessly violated, the poor man was curelly wronged. For it was these very garments that the drunken and immoral worshipers made use of for their own convenience; and the money which paid for the wine they drank came from fines imposed, doubtless often unjustly, upon those who had come to consult the venal priests.

"The picture of Jehovah's people is as ugly as it could be, but what made their conduct so peculiarly detestable was that it was a sin against light and privilege. Jehovah had cared for his people. In the early days—some four centuries and a half before—he had brought them up out of a land and state of slavery, he had led them lovingly through the great and terrible wilderness, and settled them at last safely, in face of the mightiest opposition from native tribes who are described as 'strong as the oaks and high as the cedars,' in the splendid land upon which they had proved so unfaithful to him. More than that; far better than land and victory is the gift of men, and this, too, God had given. He had sent them Nazirites to protest by their abstinence against the wine which was already becoming a national peril; he had sent them prophets, like Nathan and Elijah and Amos himself to interpret his will and declare his demands, to champion right against might, and to protest, by their courageous words, against every attempt to defraud or crush the poor. But how had these gifts been received? They had been received with scorn and violence. The men who stood for the better things in Israel had been ignored or shunned or silenced. Deliberate attempts had been made to induce abstainers to break their most solemn pledge, and to stop the honest mouths of the prophets" (J. E. McFadyen).

IV. THE PROPHET MUST BE JEHOVAH'S AGENT, 3.7, 8. Amos proclaims his message because he must: God had revealed to him his secret of Israel's doom, and as every one fears when a lion roars, so when Jehovah speaks, as he had spoken to the soul of Amos, how could the prophet help delivering his message? "Amos himself is in the grasp of that great law which explains and runs through all the phenomena of the universe, or rather of that great Person who is behind all phenomena. The great Course which explains the prophet's appearance and justifies his message is Almighty God himself."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

As you well know, there are four main divisions of the Old Testament: the Pentatuch, the Historical Books, the Poetical Books, and the Prophetical Books; and the latter are divided into the four major prophets, and the twelve minor prophets. The minor prophets are minor only in length. The prophet whom we study today was the earliest of all the writing prophets, and one of the four great prophets of the eighth century B. C. (Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah).

The reign of Jeroboam II lasted about forty years, from 783 to 743 B.C. In his reign there was increase of territory and great prosperity, but also much idolatry and sin.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Amos was a native of Tekoa, a small village six miles southeast of Bethlehem, twelve miles south of Jerusalem, on the border of the Judean wilderness. The Dead Sea was not far off, and the stern ruggedness of his surroundings seems to have influenced Amos as long years afterwards it seems to have influenced John the Baptist. Bethel, where he prophesied, was the capital of Israel, the Northern Kingdom. George Adam Smith describes the view from Tekoa:

The men of Tekoa looked out upon a desolate and haggard world. South, west, and north the view is barred by a range of limestone hills, on one of which directly north the grey towers of Jerusalem are hardly to be discerned from the grey mountain lines. Eastward, the prospect is still more desolate but it is open; the land slopes away for nearly eighteen miles to a depth of four thousand feet. A part of this long descent is the wilderness, or pasture-land of Tekoa, across which by night the wild beasts howl; and by day the blackened sites of deserted camps, with the loose cairns that mark the nomads' graves, reveal a human life almost as vagabond and nameless as that of the beasts. Upon this unmitigated wilderness, where life is reduced to poverty and danger; where nature starves the imagination, but excites the faculties of perception and curiosity; with the mountain tops and the sunrise in his face, but above all with Jerusalem so near,—Amos did the work which made him a man, heard the voice of God calling him to be a prophet, and gathered those symbols and figures in which his prophet's message still reaches us with so fresh and so austere an air.

The same interpreter of the prophets (George Adam Smith) traces the trips which Amos must have made and the information he thereby gleaned:

As a wool-grower Amos must have had his yearly journeys among the markets of

the land; and to such were probably due his opportunities of familiarity with Northern Israel, the originals of his vivid pictures of her town-life, her commerce, and the worship at her great sanctuaries. One hour westward from Tekoa would bring him to the high-road between Hebron and the North, with its troops of pilgrims passing to Beersheba. It was but half-an-hour more to the watershed and an open view of the Philistine plain. Bethlehem was only six, Jerusalem twelve, miles from Tekoa. Ten miles farther, across the border of Israel, lay Bethel with its temple, seven miles farther Gilgal, and twenty miles farther still Samaria the capital, in all but two days' journey from Tekoa. These had markets as well as shrines; their annual festivals would be also great fairs. It is certain that Amos visited them; it is even possible that he went to Damascus, in which the Israelites had at that time their own quarters for trading. By road and market he would meet with other men of other lands.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Amos was a man of keen observation who made good use of what he saw in field and village life. His addresses are replete with comparisons and illustrations drawn from that everyday life. Read the book and note all his illustrations and figures of speech, especially 1.9; 2.13; 3.1-8, 12; 5.18-20, 24; 6.12-14; 7.7-9; 8.1-3; 9.9, 13.

Successful teachers know the lasting impression which illustrations make upon pupils' minds, and are skilled in their use. One great aim of this book is to furnish teachers with illustrations that really illumine the lesson truths. But the everyday illustrations, the very important illustrations which current events and local events supply and those which may be gleaned from your own experiences and interests and especially the experiences and interests of your pupils, only you can furnish. Be on the lookout for them, for they are invaluable in your teaching.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

WORK THAT SERVES GOD

Beginning the Lesson

Amos was a Judean. Where was his home? In the desolate, sandy uplands south of Tekoa he pastured his flocks. He was a desert man. In the desert, where a man is alone with God and has time to meditate and form clear judgments, Amos, like Moses and Elijah and John the Baptist, learned leadership. He had meditated long and earnestly upon Israel's sins and probable fate when God "took him": when there flashed upon him the conviction that he must be God's messenger to his people Israel, that through him God's warning must be spoken.

His address shows clearly the influence of his life among the wilds of southern Judea. To him nature was stern, life was serious, God was severe. "To him the thunder and lightning, wind, storm and tempest, which is so often witnessed in all their fierceness and awe-inspiring grandeur on those lonely hills, were but manifestations of God's anger with his sinning people, an anger which was demanded because God was just. And the teaching of Amos dealt mainly with the wrath of God."

The Time in which Amos Lived

The prophets were in the fullest sense the products of the age in which they lived, imbued with its thoughts and cognizant of its problems. We cannot grasp their message unless we know something about the time in which they lived, the character of king and people, their sins and weaknesses and needs, the national enemies and impending dangers—the situation, in a word, which called forth their utterances.

To all outward seeming Israel was at peace and exceedingly prosperous in the time of Amos. Jeroboam II, the greatest of the kings of the Northern Kingdom, had a long and brilliant reign. Before his time Israel had lost much territory in wars with the Syrians, but the Syrians were now vanquished by the Assyrians, and Israel rapidly regained lost ground, for Jeroboam II was most successful in his military exploits. Israel was even at the height of its prosperity, feared by its enemies and respected by its allies, its foreign trade greatly expanded and its domestic commerce flourishing, and everywhere there were evidences of super-abundant wealth. Men and women were "at ease in Zion", clothed in "purple and fine linen," they reclined in ivory chairs by day and rested on ivory couches by night. But Amos was not deceived by all this display. He noted the concomitant evils, indolence and corruption and injustice, feastings and revellings and intemperance, and the belief that

God would overlook all things, that because they were his chosen people God must protect them from their enemies, that if they but observed an elaborate ritual worship they could sin as they pleased, and all would be well.

The Character and Message of Amos

Amos was intense in his beliefs and feelings. He was the champion of the simple life. He lived simply himself, and he had no use for those who lived in idle luxury. Throughout his addresses we see his hatred of all evidences of luxury or grandeur, his regard for the lowly and needy, his sympathy for the downtrodden and oppressed.

We think of the princes and elders, the wealthy and powerful in Israel, as listening to this herdsman from Tekoa in utter astonishment. They were as astonished (Dr. Jowett makes the comparison) as Sir Philip Warrick and many others were astonished, when a farmer named Oliver Cromwell came from Huntingdon, and stood amid the refinements of the English Parliament, stood there "in a plain cloth suit, made by an ill country tailor," and spoke to the assembled representatives "with voice sharp and untunable, but with eloquence full of fervor."

How could a mere herdsman and dresser of sycomore trees have such a remarkable command of language as his writing shows? Professor Robertson Smith explains: "To associate inferior culture with the simplicity and poverty of pastoral life is totally to mistake the conditions of Eastern society. At the courts of their Caliphs and their Emirs, the rude Arabs of the desert were wont to appear without any feeling of awkwardness and to surprise the courtiers by the finish of their impromptu verses, the fluent eloquence of their oratory, and the range of subjects on which they could speak with knowledge and discrimination. Among the Hebrews, as in the Arabian desert, knowledge and oratory were not affairs of professional education, or dependent for their cultivation on wealth or social status. The sum of book learning was small; men of all ranks mingled with that oriental freedom which is so foreign to our habits. A shrewd observation, a memory retentive of traditional lore, and the faculty of original reflection took the place of laborious study as the ground of intellectual pre-eminence."

Shall we wonder, too, that Amos the herdsman had so intimate a knowledge of the Court of Israel and of the character and strength and ambitions of surrounding nations, even as far as Damascus? The explanation is that as a wool-grower he probably made yearly trips to the leading markets of Judah and Israel, and occasionally even to the Jewish trading quarters in Damascus. It was only an hour from Tekoa to the great highway leading to Hebron; Jerusalem was twelve miles, and Samaria, the capital of Israel, forty-two miles away. In caravans and in marketplaces he must have met men of other nations, and he was keenly observant and wise in the deductions he drew from what he saw and heard.

Amos was a fearless servant of God. Like David, in the care of his flock he had braved ferocious beasts—the lion and the bear—and he could face brutal men without quailing. Opposition and enmity were his portion. Trouble for him culminated at one of the great festivals of Bethel, when he accused the Israelites of having sold the righteous for silver and the poor for a pair of shoes, of having turned aside the way of the meek and laid themselves down by every altar upon clothes taken in pledge. Therefore, despite their seeming prosperity, disaster would overtake them. Amaziah, the supercilious priest of Bethel, tried to silence him. Amaziah sent a message to the king accusing Amos of treason and then endeavored to frighten Amos away, but Amos fearlessly finished his warning and evidently on his return to Judah wrote down the substance of his addresses. Tradition—which may or may not be true—says that he was cruelly beaten and died in a short time after being carried back to Judea.

"A Cry for Justice" is the title which Dr. J. E. McFadyen gives to the Book of Amos, and no single term could better describe it.

The first thing that strikes one is the prophet's remarkable grasp of the fact of God's universal rule. To Amos, Israel was but one of many nations, upon all of whom God's laws of justice and kindness and righteousness are binding. One marvels at such an utterance as this at that early age: "Are ye not as the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith Jehovah. Have I not brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt, also the Philistine from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir?" Did Amos fully realize all that these words imply? The tribal point of view had been that Jehovah was the God of Israel; if there were different gods there might be different moral codes. While Amos holds all nations responsible for their failure

to keep God's laws, he is far more severe in condemning the iniquity of Israel, for Israel is the most privileged (3.2), therefore the most accountable.

Amos as Speaker and Writer

Four great facts stand out in his message to Israel: (1) the iniquity of Israel; (2) the righteousness and wrath of Jehovah; (3) the certainty of judgment; (4) the Assyrians will be God's agents in meting out the punishment.

(1) The iniquity of Israel is manifold: luxuriousness, intemperance, greed, land-robbery, perversion of justice, false weights and measures, immorality, blasphemy, sacrilege. Amos' pictures are dark, relieved only in the last chapter by a gleam of hope. (2) Amos emphasizes the greatness and holiness of God. Listen to his beautiful words in 4.13: "For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought; that maketh the morning darkness and treadeth upon the high places of the earth—Jehovah, the God of hosts, is his name"; and read his sublime description of the righteousness of God in the last chapter of the Book. (3) The keynote of the Book is "judgment." Thus will I do unto thee, O Israel, 4.12. (4) As Jesus foresaw the coming of the Roman power to destroy Jerusalem (Luke 19.41-44), so Amos foresaw in an Assyrian invasion the destruction of Samaria. In a series of visions (7.1-9; 8.1-3; 9.1) he beheld ever more and more distinctly the doom advancing. Twice he prayed that the blow might be averted, 7.2, 5.

The Lessons of Amos for Us

It is not for his own time only that Amos enjoins his readers to "hate the evil and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate"; his voice, though addressed to Israel more than twenty-six centuries ago, still thunders on and stirs the hearts of men. We cannot read the book without asking ourselves, Is our nation morally sound? Do we believe that if ours is a favored nation, her unrighteousness will be all the more severely punished? Does our conduct—whether as merchants or landowners or judges or men of wealth and leisure—square with God's demands of justice and equity? Do we not know that the greatest of perils lies, not in poverty, but in prosperity? Do we not know that God disciplines his people, and that discipline unheeded fixes destiny?

"Let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream," 5.24. This is the ideal which Amos had in mind for the Israelites. By "judgment" is meant justice, that virtue which impels us to give every one his just due; and by "righteousness," upright conduct, especially toward the weak and oppressed. Thus tersely and forcibly he urged the doing of the right and loving thing to another—Justice and Equity were to fill the land as with a flood of constant and vivifying waters. In the face of modern conditions, do we not need righteousness as a river flowing through the land and bringing blessing to all the people?

How Stanley Jones Received his Call to India

When I was in college I was not interested in missions, but there was a group of students in the college who were. They were very wise. Instead of asking me to be a missionary they gave me a talk to make on missions, and the more I studied the matter the more deeply concerned I felt. I came to the day when I was to give the address, and I was so broken up that when the hour came I said: "I have no disposition to give any address or go into that room unless something happens. Something ought to be done about it."

I was in a state of spiritual desperation, and the inner voice came and said, "According to your faith be it unto you." I said, "Somebody will go from this meeting as a missionary." Little did I know who it would be. I found that I was the one; I had prayed myself into it.

When I got through my college education I received a letter from the college president saying: "It is the will of the faculty, the student body, the religious people, and, we believe, it is the will of God for you to enter evangelistic work at the home base." At the very same time I got a letter from the Mission Board saying, "It is our will to send you to India."

There was a traffic jam of wills there. I took the letter from the Mission Board aside and opened it before God, and said: "What am I to do? I have got to answer this. My life is not my own." And clearly the inner voice said, "It is India." I said, "All right, it is India." I wrote to the Mission Board and said, "I am willing to go, and ready."

Now, I am sufficiently old-fashioned to believe in a divine call. I have been called to India, and I have been recalled, so I go back. The central reason why I go back is simply that call. That call makes me feel this: the question of success or failure is irrelevant. If you were to tell me I was going back to failure, and would see no converts, and would die without the vision fulfilled, I would say, "All right, send me back." That is not the question. It is not mine to succeed or fail, it is mine to be true to the highest that I know. Some way, somehow, the vision will catch fire, and the world will see it, though it may not be in my time.

The Call Today

Quit you like men, be strong;
There's a burden to bear,
There's a grief to share
There's a heart that breaks 'neath a load of care—
But fare ye forth with a song.

Quit you like men, be strong;
There's a battle to fight,
There's a wrong to right,
There's a God who blesses the good with might—
So fare ye forth with a song.

Quit you like men, be strong;
There's a work to do,
There's a world to make new,
There's a call for men who are brave and true—
On! on with a song!

Quit you like men, be strong;
There's a year of grace,
There's a God to face,
There's another heat in the great world race—
Speed! speed with a song.—William Herbert Hudnut.

For Bible Class Discussion

How to appreciate the greatness of Amos. There is only one sure way of learning to know Amos, and that is by repeated reading of the book. Read it through at a sitting. Read it again slowly and part by part, for it falls naturally into three parts: (a) chapters one and two; (b) chapters three to six; and (c) chapters seven to nine. Then read it again at a sitting and yet again in its several parts. So will it gradually appear to your mind that you are in the presence of a great man, a man of unusual gifts apart altogether from his religious message. Remember the age of this book, 760 years before Christ—a long while ago, and none of the great nations about Israel were able to produce at that time anything to match it. We may well wonder as we read Amos.—Robert W. Rogers.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What was the Book of the Law? 2. Who were the prophets of Josiah's time? 3. What is meant by "made a covenant before Jehovah"? 4. What is meant by "stand to it"? 5. Mention several great reformers who were influenced in their work by the Bible. 6. How do Josiah's Bible and ours compare in extent and value? 7. How may the Bible be lost today?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

ANSWERING GOD'S CALL

Beginning the Lesson

How does the Book of Amos begin? What does Amos say about himself in 7.14, 15? Can you not see Amos keeping his lonely watch over his goats, and when they are not inclined to wander, sitting by himself and meditating, gazing off toward Jerusalem whose white towers he could dimly descry on the horizon, gazing up at the brilliant stars and thinking that ever like them in multitudes so had been the lovingkindnesses of God to his chosen people?

"Sometimes," writes Dean Hodges in The Castle of Zion, "a caravan came by; such as stopped in the old time on its way from Midian to Egypt, and carried off Joseph. The men of these caravans were traders, who brought the spices of the

East to sell in the markets of the South. The road lay beside the fields of Amos, and when they stopped to give their camels drink from the well at which he watered the sheep, he talked with them. They told him what was going on in Damascus and in Tyre; they described what they had seen in Israel and in Judah; they brought him the gossip of the nations. After they were gone he thought about these things for days.

"Sometimes he took the wool of his sheep, and went into cities to sell it. And he looked about him, noticing what buildings were there, and how the people dressed and behaved themselves. He observed the rich and the poor. He visited the courts of law, and listened to the judges. He attended services in churches, and watched the priests. Then he came home to his sheep, and thought about what he had seen and heard. He hated the rich merchants, who lived in splendid houses of hewn stone, and lay upon soft cushions on beds of ivory, and were entertained by skillful players on instruments of music, and drank wine out of bowls, selling goods out of measures which were too small and in scales whose weights were too light, making men work long hours for little pay, charging high prices, afflicting the souls of the poor. He hated the priests, who busied themselves with beautiful services, and let this wickedness go on without a protest.

"As Amos thought upon these things, he said to himself, God cannot bless any nation which disobeys his laws. Wickedness shall certainly be punished. These great cities shall certainly be destroyed unless they repent, and change their ways.

"It seemed to Amos very dreadful that people should be going on toward such a fate with nobody doing anything to prevent it. He felt like one who sees a boat drifting down a river, and knows that beyond are rapids and then a steep fall, and that the people are bound to be drowned unless they turn about and row up stream or to the shore. At last, he heard the voice of God in his soul telling him to cry aloud and give a warning."

The Training of Amos

Amos grew from a shepherd boy into a shepherd, and hard is the shepherd's life every way, but in few places so hard as there. The flock of sheep would have to be led considerable distance to find pasture, and the shepherd might at times be weeks away from home alone with his sheep on hillsides hard and forbiding. Food would be rough and scanty, bread usually unleavened and baked in round cake fashion on a heated stone, with meat an uncommon luxury, cooked with a few lentils and onions. In seasons fit for their production there would be figs and olives, pistachio nuts and almonds, and pomegranates and dates, and there would be milk and cheese, but none of these in any abundance. Below Tekoa lay the Dead Sea, and a welter of sickening heat with torrential downpours of rain in the season both of early and latter rains. The shepherd must take the weather as it came and with no protection against any of its rigors. He slept with his sheep, and with one eye open to protect them with a heavy club when need arose. A thief might creep up to steal a sheep and carry it off for a feast with his fellows, and if the shepherd traveled northward near the thickets of Jordan there were skulking lions eager to snatch a straggler from the flock.

The meager life wrung from shepherd's toil was supplemented by Amos through the exercise of another labor. There are two kinds of fig trees grown in the East, the one small which bears the well-known and highly esteemed fig of commerce, the other large and commonly called the sycomore fig. This tree bears a very inferior fruit seldom eaten by man, and refused even by cattle unless in extremes of hunger. There is, however, a method by which it may be improved so as to be usable. As the fig nears maturity it may be punctured by a sharp instrument, and then discharges a few drops of acrid juice. The wound heals, the fig ripens and is then edible by cattle and may even serve to nourish the poor. Shepherding and puncturing of sycomore fruits, these were the labors of Amos; by these was his humble life sustained from childhood. If we could have seen Amos in those days we should probably have said, "There he is, a common drudge, and so he will remain." Yet in that common drudge there was the making of a great man when God and he were come into partnership.

Amos was in training as he led his sheep or punctured the sycomore figs. He was not likely aware of this, but men who come into greatness seldom know in the formative years just how the opportunities and the passing days are forming them. When Amos was with his fellows he must have talked much of serious

things, and his talk was certainly good. This judgment is sure because his book is in extraordinarily good Hebrew.—Condensed from Great Characters of the Old Testament, by Robert W. Rogers.

Answering God's Call

They tell a story of Ole Bull and Ericsson his bosom friend—Ole Bull marvelous in his love and mastery of music, Ericsson marvelous in his inventive skill and power, yet without any ear for music, as was supposed. Again and again Ole Bull tried to arouse his friend, inviting him to his entertainments, striving to get him to listen to music, but he always refused. Then one day Ole Bull took his violin to the office of his friend and said, "Ericsson, here is my violin, something is the matter with it. Have you a workman in the shop that can put it right?" Ericsson gave it to one of his men, and in a little while the instrument was brought back. Then Ole Bull, with a wonderful intuition of the capacities of his friend, drew the bow across the violin, and began to send forth some of those marvelous notes of which he was capable, until the doors and the passageways were filled with workmen flocking from all parts of the factory to listen to the master. And Ericsson finally cried out, "Ole, Ole, I've an ear for music after all."

And so God tries to draw out, to find the hidden thing in you and me, the capacity for great things that is inherited, maybe, but we have not recognized, the capacity for holy living, the capacity for response to himself, and he touches this spring and that spring and the other, until we suddenly rise to this great fact, we reach the place where we say, "I ought, I ought, and therefore I can."—Joseph T. Kelly.

The Call for Service Comes in the Small Things

You remember how the message came to Philip as he was preaching in Samaria to "arise and go into Gaza, which is desert." That must have seemed an astonishing call to the busy preacher, for Gaza was practically a deserted village. But there he met and taught the Ethiopian and baptized him. It seemed a small thing to do, yet it was God's call.

"Often we make the mistake of thinking that God's call will come to us to do something big. But God comes to you and says, 'Do the duty which lies nearest your hand at the moment.' He points out something small that must be undertaken, and the small leads to the large and the large leads to the great. The original call that came to William Cary, the shoemaker, was not to translate parts of the New Testament into forty of the dialects of India; it was to make a map of the world out of scraps of leather. It is from the little things beautifully done that God bids us pass on to the great achievements."

Open Mine Eyes

Jesus, Master, whom I serve,
Though so feebly and so ill,
Strengthen hand and heart and nerve
All thy bidding to fulfil.
Open thou mine eyes to see
All the work thou hast for me.—F. R. Havergal.

Sentence Sermons

He who is convinced that there remains naught for him to do but to enjoy himself, is little more than an erect animal.—Rabbi J. Leonard Levy.

Hate the evil, and love the good.—Amos.

He that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man that is his thought—Jehovah, the God of hosts, is his name.—Amos.

Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live.—Amos.

Let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.—Amos.

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Name the Historical Books of the Old Testament. 2. Read Dt. 12.26 and imagine Jonah's feelings on hearing these words read. 3. What was the result of the reading of the book? 4. Mention three ways in which Josiah sets us a splendid example. 5. What help are you getting from your Bible? 6. If your Bible is not read, is it a lost book to you?

JOSIAH (A Royal Reformer)

GOLDEN TEXT: Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
And light unto my path. Psalm 119.105

LESSON 2 Kings 22; 23.1-3, 21-25; 2 Chronicles 34 and 35
DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 119.9-16

2. KINGS 22.1 Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign; and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath. 2 And he did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.

8 And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of Jehovah. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan, and he read it.

23.1 And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. 2 And the king went up to the house of Jehovah, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of Jehovah. 3 And the king stood by the pillar, and made a covenant before Jehovah, to walk after Jehovah, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all *his* heart, and all *his* soul, to confirm the words of this covenant that were written in this book: and all the people stood to the covenant.

21 And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto Jehovah your God, as it is written in this book of the covenant. 22 Surely there was not kept such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah; 23 but in the eighteenth year of king Josiah was this passover kept to Jehovah in Jerusalem.

24 Moreover them that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the teraphim, and the idols, and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might confirm the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of Jehovah. 25 And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to Jehovah with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE CHARACTER AND REIGN OF JOSIAH, 22.1, 2. Josiah was the son of Amon and Jedidah. He became king of Judah when eight years of age, and it is said that during his reign of thirty-one years he "wholly followed the Lord," pursuing righteousness as did David his ancestor, not deviating from it in any way.

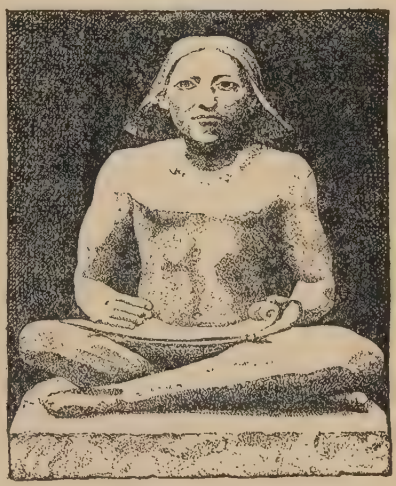
"In Josiah's youthful training is probably to be found the explanation of his remarkable character and work," writes Professor Kent. "The probabilities strongly support the conclusion that his youthful teacher was the prophet Zephaniah, whose sermons roused the nation as well as the young king. The stern, uncompromising spirit which characterizes the prophet's reform sermons is reflected in the extreme measures adopted later by Josiah. Jeremiah must have been born during the closing years of Manasseh's reign, and was therefore a contemporary of King Josiah and of the royal prophet Zephaniah. In the light of the narrative of Kings, it is evident that Zephaniah and Jeremiah did not stand alone in their efforts for reform. Hilkiah the priest was in full sympathy with the new movement. And Josiah had gathered about him a group of able officers who supported him in his reform measures."

II. THE FINDING OF THE BOOK OF THE LAW, 22.3-8. When twenty-six years of age Josiah turned his attention to the repairing of the ruined temple. Through Shaphan, the scribe, he directed Hilkiah, the priest, to take account of the money which the people had brought to the house of God and give it to the Levites appointed to receive it. The latter were to pay the men for their work on the temple. The overseers were Levites, other Levites encouraged the workmen with music, and yet other Levites were scribes and officers and porters. The work progressed rapidly.

During this work upon the temple, Hilkiah found the book of the law of Jehovah. This book of the law was probably the legal portions (chapters 12 to 26 and chapters 28) of our Book of Deuteronomy (which calls itself "The Book

of the Law" and also "The Book of the Covenant"), for Josiah's reforms followed the directions laid down in these chapters.

Some scholars believe that this book had long been known, but had been forgotten during the idolatrous reigns of Manasseh and Amon, and Hilkiah found it in the temple. Others hold that it was "a new and enlarged edition of the Book of the Covenant prepared for the needs of the times, and brought forth now because Josiah was a righteous king who would enforce its decrees." George Adam Smith points out that it is precisely from this time onward that the style and phraseology which are characteristic of Deuteronomy begin to affect the literature of Israel. In Deuteronomy 31.9, 26, Moses is said to have written the law and delivered it to the priests. Yet there are evidences in the book itself that some portions of it were written by a writer subsequent to Moses. For example, Moses could not have written chapter 34, the account of his death. The phrase "beyond Jordan" for the eastern side of the river would be used only by one living in Western Palestine, and Moses never crossed the Jordan. It speaks of boundary marks which had been set up by "those of the olden time" (19.14), indicating that when the words were written the Israelites had long been settled in the land. Deuteronomy may contain laws and customs, not of a single lifetime, but developed by many generations of God-inspired men, expressed in the form of valedictory orations of the great lawgiver.



Statue of a Scribe Dating from 2200 B.C.
In the Cairo Museum

Hilkiah told Shaphan the scribe of the discovery and gave him the book to carry to Josiah when he made his report to the king of the progress of the work upon the temple.

"Any individual or any institution that could take the Bible to every home in this country would do more for the country than all the armies from the beginning of our history to the present time" (Chief Justice Brewer).

III. THE EFFECT UPON JOSIAH OF THE READING OF THE BOOK OF THE LAW, 22.9-13. After telling the king that the work upon the temple was progressing well, the money having been given to the overseers and the workmen put at work, Shaphan told him of the discovery of the book and read it aloud to him. The king rent his clothes in token of his troubled mind, "for," said he, "great is the wrath of Jehovah that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us." Read Chapters 12-26 of Deuteronomy, with Josiah in mind, and it will be easy to see why he was so greatly moved.

"When a nation loses its Bible the door is opened to all disorder, socially and religiously. The story of Judah under the two reigns preceding that of Josiah is evidence of this in the Bible itself. But the evidence is abundant all along the line of history. When the divine law and standard for life has been lost or forgotten, then ignorance, idolatry, social injustice, oppression of women and children, and the like, have always flourished. It is not the less true of our own time. Our present troubles are wholly due to the neglect of the law of God. A hundred nearer reasons may be advanced, but this is the mother reason, and it must be faced before there can be improvement" (The Christian).

IV. THE COVENANT MADE BY THE KING AND PEOPLE, 23.1-3. Josiah called a representative assembly to Jerusalem, priests and prophets (Jeremiah, Habakkuk and Zephanial were living about this time) and people, "both small and great," and after having them listen to the reading of the book, he covenanted

before Jehovah to keep God's commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all his heart, and all his soul, and then he called upon the assembly "to stand to it," to signify their intent to keep the law, probably by a rising vote.

"A covenant is not necessarily bilateral, that is to say, it does not necessarily imply reciprocal obligations between two parties. The word translated *covenant* seems to have denoted simply a well-understood and complex religious ceremony, which rendered an undertaking permanently and irrevocably binding on those concerned. This was not a covenant made *with* Jehovah, but *before* Jehovah. Neither was it a covenant between the king on the one part and the people on the other. It was nothing more than a solemn engagement on the part of king and people together to keep the law" (New Century Bible).

"It was a very tiny Bible that they had in those days. We have treasures of an incomparably wider order than any which belonged to them. We have all theirs plus immeasurable riches of the New Testament. We have their commandments, and we have our Beatitudes. We have the Book of Deuteronomy, but we have the Gospel of John. We have the Psalms, but we have also the Epistles. We have the Law, but we have the Holy Gospel of Grace and Love. We have Moses, but we have Jesus, too. What are we going to do with our wealth? It is like a continent compared with their parish. If that is what man did when they had a parish, what must we do with a continent?" (J. H. Jowett).

V. JOSIAH'S RELIGIOUS REFORMATION, 23.4-20. Josiah was very thorough in his reform measures. He had the temple purged of every idol and every vessel that had been used for idolatrous worship, the idolatrous priests removed, and all the idolatrous high places and altars in Judah destroyed. Not content with this, he had the same thorough cleansing made in the Northern Kingdom, even digging up bones of the priests of Baal and burning them upon the altars of Baal, and having living high priests slain.

VI. THE PASSOVER KEPT, 23.21-23. Read details about this passover given in Second Chronicles 35.1-19. The Passover which Josiah now ordered observed, was so notable in its strict following of directions laid down in the Book of the Law and in the members taking part that the writer of the account declared it far exceeded any observed during the judges or in the reigns of any of the kings of Israel or of Judah. "Formerly the Passover had been a household feast which could be observed anywhere throughout the country (Dt. 16.5); now for the first time the people were obliged to come up to Jerusalem for the purpose of celebrating it" (Skinner).

"The heathen cults may have ceased for the rest of Josiah's reign, but upon his death they immediately revived. But the centralization of the national worship of Jehovah, the establishment of the one sanctuary for the One God, was settled once for all. Whether cleansed or not from heathen cults, Jerusalem became, not merely the principal school and shrine of the one great system of ethical and intellectual monotheism in the ancient world, but its material sign and sacrament, its only altar" (George Adam Smith).

VII. FURTHER REFORMS; AN APPRAISEMENT OF JOSIAH, 23.24, 25. Among those whose work Josiah stopped were "those that dealt with familiar spirits" and the wizards. For an instance of such, recall Saul's visit to the witch of Endor, 1 S. 28.7-21. This practise was forbidden in Lev. 20.27 under penalty of death. All the teraphim (images which were household gods) and the idols and all the abominable practises Josiah had put away, that the law as given in the book found by Hilkiah might be kept.

"It is impossible to rightly govern the world without the Bible" (George Washington).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The book, 22.8. Our word *volume* comes from the Latin noun *volumen,* which is formed from the Latin verb *volvere,* to roll. A volume was a roll on which words were written. Sheets of papyrus, and later of parchment, were joined together so as to form one continuous sheet, and then were rolled upon a staff to form a volume. Such was the book found in the temple. Similar scrolls are used today in Jewish synagogues.

I have found the book of the law in the house of Jehovah, 22.8. Professor Cornill considers it inconceivable that a book so significant as the Book of the Law should have vanished, leaving no trace behind, and that, too, in an age when the richest literary life prevailed in Israel. Professor Naville, however, proves by finds in Egypt that such a thing is not inconceivable. He shows that from time immemorial it was the custom to bury sacred books or laws at the feet of a god or in the foundation of a temple. This custom prevailed in Babylon as well as in Egypt. He quotes a rubric attached to a chapter of the Egyptian Book of the Dead, which had been buried for generations before its discovery by the king's son while inspecting the temples of Egypt: "He brought it to the king as a marvel when he saw that it was something very mysterious which no one had ever seen or set eyes on before."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Judah's Apostasy

Throughout the history of Judah we see that the people readily followed their king. The great religious reforms of Hezekiah were quickly succeeded in his son's reign by a revival of heathen idolatry. Under Hezekiah the people had grown to a higher spiritual stature than under any previous king. Under Manasseh, his son, the process was reversed. How could the change take place so rapidly? Dr. George Adam Smith explains that "We must recall the prevalence of such forms of worship all around Judah, but especially in Samaria; and also the probable addition to the population from the Judean towns devastated by Sennacherib in which Canaanite cults still survived, from the Palestinian and Phœnician cities that had suffered by the campaigns of Esar-haddon and Assurbanipal, and from the great increase in trade under the Assyrian lordship of Western Asia."

The Reign of Josiah

Josiah was king of Judah from 639 to 608 B.C. When he began to reign Assyria was losing her position of world power; when he died the Chaldeans were coming into the ascendency. His reign was during the calm between two great foreign invasions.

The Momentousness of the Discovery of the Book of the Law

That was a memorable reformation under Josiah, when by solemn ordinance the written law discovered in the temple was accepted by king and people assembled in the sanctuary. It marked an era in the history of Israel, in the history of religion itself. For the first time the Jews had a written canon of Holy Scripture, a Bible. Henceforth they could claim the name which attaches to them until this day in Oriental lands,—"The people of the Book." The Law of Moses was not only Bible but constitution, statutory law, and everything else.—Benjamin W. Bacon.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

There is a great contrast in the records of the two boy kings of Judah, Manasseh and Josiah. Manasseh, the son of good King Hezekiah, ascended the throne at the age of twelve and was an evil king, the worst of idolaters, following after every false god and scorning all the warnings of the prophets. Josiah, the son of wicked King Amon and grandson of Manasseh, became king at the age of eight and, despite the evil influences that surrounded him, "turned to Jehovah with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might." The trend of each life began in boyhood. The crooked and dwarfed trees in the woods did not grow up straight and tall for a season and then change to their present condition: something gave the crook to the tree or stopped its sturdiness early in life. The spiritual life of human beings is much like the natural life of trees: it is in boyhood and girlhood that the trend is given to character which will make it strong and upright.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

A BOOK REFORMS A STATE

Beginning the Lesson

How have ancient manuscripts come down to us? What would have been the effect on human civilization, on literature, on science, on philosophy, had they not been discovered?

Few books have had greater influence on the human mind than the works of Aristotle. How did they come down to us? When Aristotle was about to die, he bequeathed his manuscripts to a disciple, Theophrastus, he to one Neleus. This man, on account of war raging, hid the treasure in a cellar, and, dying soon after, forgot to tell anyone what he had done with the manuscripts. Thus for two hundred years the works of Aristotle were buried from human sight. Insects, mold and other destructive agencies had eaten into the text, but we owe it to an accident that a book collector, Ampellicon of Teos, discovered the manuscript before it was totally destroyed.

We wonder about the Book of Deuteronomy being found in the temple, do we? A French nobleman found a part of a manuscript of Livy's History on his racquet bat. He went to the maker of the bat, but found the parchment had all been used up. The Digest of Roman Law, by the Emperor Justinian, was found by soldiers in the débris of a city they had captured. Coming to later days, it is not a little surprising that the original manuscript of the Magna Charta was discovered in the hands of a tailor who was cutting it for patterns. Lady Montague's letters were found in a false bottom of an old trunk, and what a story is that of the discovery of Lord Herbert of Cherbury's autobiography; of one of the cantos of Dante's Paradise, which had fallen behind a window sill; of Milton's tractate on The Doctrines of Christianity; of Benvenuto's memoirs, and of many other writings that might be mentioned; the Codex Sinaiticus, the Logia, or sayings of our Lord and other papyri found in Egypt by Grenfell and Harris and the Misses Lewis; the Ostraca from the dust heaps of forgotten towns which now give data for Professor Deissman's great work, Light from the Ancient East.—Adapted from an article in The Christian Advocate, by R. J. Cooke.

Continue with Explanations and Comments.

Great Moral and Spiritual Movements usually Begin with a Re-discovery of the Bible

It was distinctly the case with the Reformation of the sixteenth century. The finding by Luther of the Bible in the convent library was the origin of the mighty revolution he effected. The Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century commenced by Oxford students meeting for the study of the Scriptures. Many striking parallels may be found. And is it not so with individual life? Sincere men, in whom the spiritual consciousness has by some means been awakened, go to the Bible to find it a new book, so new that it seems as if it had just been let down from Heaven. It suits, it delights the inner sense as the light of the sun the eye, and we rejoice as those who no longer walk in darkness. When the spiritual life in a man is found to be dying down let him go back to the Bible; a re-discovery of its deep and marvelous truths will vitalize, animate, transform, transfigure.—W. L. Watkinson.

Behind all great movements of the Western World has been the Bible, and the Bible has made the conquering races of modern times. It was the printing of the Bible which awoke Europe and produced the Reformation; it was the reading of the Bible which put blood into Puritanism and made England free. The United States was founded by men whose minds were charged with the Bible spirit; and everything that is strong in the national character of the Anglo-Saxon race has come from Bible teaching.—Ian Maclaren.

A Live Question

How far can real, lasting reform be achieved by force and law? Or must reform wait upon the slow, steady interpenetration of truth in the hearts of the people? It is a live question with us today. This passage may have some hints towards an answer of it. Here, at any rate, we have a king of strong, imperious will and stern purpose who sets out upon a ruthless reform, who achieves his purpose so far with his people that it is said of him that "all his days they departed not from following the Lord, the God of their fathers." Those words make us think of such men as Knox and Cromwell, who allowed no obstacle to stand in the way of that right thing which they wished to accomplish. But Josiah called in also the aid of the church and the Bible. He did the work of a surgeon in cutting out of the body politic the festering sore that was destroying the national life, but he applied healing remedies for the cure of the hurts that he had caused. It may be that in the last analysis moral reforms and advances can be made only as Josiah's principles of action are made use of.—James Black, in the New Outlook.

Aggressive in Fighting for the Right

Every year the Oxford and Cambridge boat race draws vast crowds and nearly everybody, from the youngest to the oldest, seems to take sides and wear the colors of his favorite team. Neutrality on such a day tends to be regarded as the mark of a poor spirit.

"When we get home," said a girl to her small sister, "we'll hold up our colors." They had two pale blue paper whisks. From the pavement rose a mournful voice: "But we lost!"—"All the more reason for holding our colors up," said her sister. Having taken sides, it was evidently "for better or for worse." She was not ashamed of her colors, even though they were not the winning colors.

To take sides is a wise thing, if one wants to get most out of the race. The event has more meaning for you when you really care who wins. You are more interested —you feel the thrill, share the emotions of the contest. If you are merely indifferent to the issue, it is not the same. It seems necessary if one is to fully enjoy the race even as a spectator, that he should be for or against.

To get the utmost out of life, one needs to be definitely ranged on one side or the other—"in the strife of truth with falsehood, for the good or evil side." One needs to feel committed for better or for worse.

A youth once asked Whittier how he might get the most out of life. The reply was, "join yourself to some worthy yet unpopular cause." That was what Whittier had done. He early threw in his whole-hearted lot with the Emancipation Movement. He served and suffered and sacrificed. Yet long after he said the cause owed him nothing. The service had been more than its own reward. Because of those loyalties, life had been a bigger and more thrilling thing.

The man who takes sides and fights for some great cause finds life. In the office in New York once occupied by Theodore Roosevelt as President of the Police Board, 1895-1897, there is a tablet "in grateful appreciation of his services and inspiration to the police force of that city." The first sentence on that tablet is this, "Aggressive fighting for the right is the noblest sport the world affords." That is just another way of saying what Whittier said. Wrong things were afoot in New York, and Roosevelt took his side, and measured his strength against the power of evil.

These men had the true reformer's conscience and felt themselves part of every situation they were placed in. They could not be mere indifferent spectators. Nor can any true man. He feels the meanness of assuming the position of spectator or critic everywhere and of actor nowhere! It is a man's simple duty to take sides and play his part in the great issues of life.—F. C. Hoggarth.

Stand By

Said President Hoover in a campaign speech: "The Presidency is more than an administrative office. It must be the symbol of American ideals. The high and the lowly must be seen with the same eyes, met in the same spirit. It must be the instrument by which national conscience is livened, and it must, under the guidance of the Almighty, interpret and follow that conscience."

These four years are ours, to set the nation forward or to put it back. If "the instrument by which national conscience is livened" appeals to our consciences in a big way, let us respond in a big way. No one can comprehend the mighty opportunities that face us nationwise, but we can understand enough of them to realize that, if we will but pull together, we can put this nation nearer to its God-given destiny than it has ever been before: to be the home of a people truly free, doing the right, "as God gives us to see the right," putting liberty before license, law before personal preference, good works before pretensions, God before everything else. To assist in all these things let us—stand by.—William Frederick Bigelow.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The Book of Deuteronomy. See Bible Dictionaries.
2. The need of a more frequent reading and better understanding of the Bible.
3. I believe the Bible to be true because it finds me.—Coleridge.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Was Jeremiah's hesitancy to undertake his prophetic mission commendable? 2. Compare Jeremiah's call with that of Isaiah and of Ezekiel. 3. What was the length of Jeremiah's ministry? 4. What great historical events occurred during his ministry? 5. What were the chief sins which Jeremiah attacked? 6. What is the message of

his sermon in Jer. 7.1-28? 7. How does he rank among the prophets? 8. What gives him so high a rank?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

GETTING HELP FROM THE BIBLE

Beginning the Lesson

"He was a king's son, and a king's grandson, and he was a king himself—a king at eight years of age! We have a proverb, 'as happy as a king!' But he was too young a king to be a happy one, and perhaps was made king too early to be even a happy boy.

"He had a bad man for his father, and a still worse man for his grandfather. His father reigned over two years, and was put to death; his grandfather reigned over fifty years, and lived an evil life all the time. But instead of saying, 'My grandfather and my father were both bad men, and I cannot be blamed if I be bad too,' he said, 'God in his strange providence has called me, a mere child, to be king—I must strive to be a good one.' He made a wise resolve. He said, 'I'll try to be like David, the best of my kingly ancestors; to love God as he did; to love my people as he did; and to do, like him, a king's duty.'"

Who was this young king? How long did he reign? What is said of him in the second verse of our lesson? Edward VI was only ten years of age when he became king of England, and but sixteen when he died. Prince Albert had a marble statue of the young king carved with his scepter resting on a Bible, and beneath the Bible these words inscribed: "While he was yet young he began to seek after the God of David his father." These are the words which the Chronicler (2 Ch. 34.3) used about Josiah. (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

Lost and Found Bibles

Adoniram Judson, the American missionary in Burma, had translated the Bible into the Burmese language when war was waged between Burma and England, and he was put in prison suspected of being a spy for England. His sufferings were terrible, for he was bound for nineteen months with three sets of fetters (part of the time with five), and confined in a loathsome cell. Mrs. Judson, knowing that the precious manuscript would be found and seized in her home, at first buried it, and then fearing that it would decay if left longer in the ground, she wrapped it about with cotton and made it into a pillow for her husband in his cell. Once the pillow was stolen by the soldiers, but Mrs. Judson redeemed it by giving them a better one. Then one night Dr. Judson was hurried off to a distant prison and his pillow was thrown out into the prison yard. There one of his faithful converts found it and took it home, because it had belonged to his loved teacher.

Dr. Judson mourned for his lost Bible, but long afterwards to his great joy he found it uninjured in the house of his convert. Is it not wonderful that this book was saved? Dr. Judson lived to see thousands reading it and keeping its laws. The earliest account of a lost and found Bible (Book of the Law) is given in both Second Chronicles and Second Kings. It was in the time of Josiah that the book was found. (Text Explained.)

Getting Help from the Bible

A great student of the Bible gives in a single sentence the help which everyone can get from the Bible, just such help as we see Josiah getting from his Bible: "The Bible is a good book wherewith to make men see that they have gone wrong and are wrong; it is a good book to show them how to start aright and do right; and when they have started aright and are trying to go right, it is a good book to guide them in their perplexity respecting what is right."

A colporteur (one who sells Bibles in non-Christian lands) sold a copy of Proverbs one day to a man in Ceylon who made a business of receiving bribes for bearing false witness in the courts. The next day, however, the man brought the little book back and asked for his money. "It tells quite against me, and reproves too much every one who is in the wrong paths," he explained.

The Bible is not a book to be worshiped. The way to know it so as to get help from it is to use it. "It is not to be looked at, but to be looked through. To bind a Bible beautifully, to lift it reverently, to speak of it with admiration, to guard it with all care, is not at all to the point. Look through it. Find God with it. See

what God was to the men of the Bible, and then let him be the same to you. See the proofs of his power, and prove that power for yourself in yourself. Search the Scriptures for the testimony of Jesus, and honor them by being an honor to the One they reveal."

How a Young Man Found the Bible

A short time ago, writes a friend, a young man who has not attended church or read his Bible for a long time, but who recently began to take a great interest in good literature, came to me full of enthusiasm over something that he had read in a magazine.

"Listen to this," he said, opening the periodical. He read for a few minutes, and there was a new note of reverence in his voice as he ended with: "Or ever the silver cord be loosed or the golden bowl be broken or the pitcher be broken at the fountain or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." His face glowed as he exclaimed: "Isn't that wonderful?"

"It is," I agreed. "Would you like to read more by the same author?"

He nodded, and I handed him my Bible that lay on my desk.

He stared at me. "You don't mean to say that's from the Bible?"

I nodded and opened the book at the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes and he read: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."

"I didn't know that was in the Bible," he said quietly. "Are there any more passages like that?"

I turned to the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah and passed on to other beautiful passages both of the Old Testament and of the New. He listened to them eagerly.

A few days ago he said to me: "I'm going to church now." He had found his God again through reading the Bible.

It has been a real joy to watch the spiritual awakening of that young man who had been rejecting the spiritual food for which he really hungered because at some time in his youth it must have been served to him unattractively.—The Youth's Companion.

Is Your Bible Interesting?

Little Mary had asked her older sister to help her with her Sunday school lesson. When her sister finished her other duties she took her Bible and called:

"Come, Mary, I will help you now, and then you can go back to your play."

Mary came running, all ready to begin, but on seeing the Bible her sister had brought, said, "Sister, let's read the lesson out of Grandpa's Bible."

"Why, what difference will that make?"

"Grandpa's Bible is so much more interesting than yours."

"Oh, no, Mary. They are exactly alike."

"Well," replied the little girl, "I really think that Grandpa's Bible must be more interesting than yours, he reads it so much more."

Sentence Sermons

The Bible is the best gift God has given to man.—Lincoln.

To use books aright is to go to them for help.—Ruskin.

Thy word have I laid up in my heart
That I might not sin against thee.
I will delight myself in thy statutes:
I will not forget thy word.
Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
And light unto my path.—Ps. 119.11, 16, 105.

In the great war of Right and Wrong, even I
My feeble help can give
To build a better world. For my small part
Thank God, with all my heart!—Abbie Farwell Brown.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. How did Amos receive his call to be a prophet? 2. How did Jeremiah? 3. Why did he hesitate to obey, and what convinced him that he must and could? 4. What does the saying in 31.29 mean? 5. What does the way Jeremiah alters it mean? 6. What is said about the cup of the new covenant in the celebration of the Lord's Supper? 7. What is meant by this?

JEREMIAH (A Prophet of Individual Religion)

GOLDEN TEXT: Each one of us shall give account of himself to God. Romans 14.12

LESSON Jeremiah 1.1-10; 14.7-22; 31.27-34
DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 119.33-40

JEREMIAH 1.4 Now the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, 5 Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee; I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations. 6 Then said I, Ah, Lord Jehovah! behold, I know not how to speak; for I am a child. 7 But Jehovah said unto me, Say not, I am a child; for to whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go, and whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak. 8 Be not afraid because of them; for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith Jehovah. 9 Then Jehovah put forth his hand, and touched my mouth; and Jehovah said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth: 10 see, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down and to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.

31.27 Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast. 28 And it shall come to pass that, like as I have watched over them to pluck up and to break down and to overthrow and to destroy and to afflict, so will I watch over them to build and to plant, saith Jehovah. 29 In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge. 30 But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge.

31 Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith Jehovah. 33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. JEREMIAH'S CALL, 1.4-10. In the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign (the reformer of our last lesson), Jeremiah, the son of a priest in the little town of Anathoth, near Jerusalem, became conscious of a divine call to the prophetic office. He was very reluctant to take upon himself the duties of a prophet, and the struggle which took place in his mind when something different from his ordinary consciousness made him certain that he was destined to be God's prophet of woe, he has told in the form of a dialogue between God and himself.

God speaks first and tells Jeremiah he had been chosen and consecrated before his birth, and that he is now appointed a prophet, not to the Jews only, but to all nations. "Jeremiah's mission sprang out of his personal awareness of God. He awoke to the fact that Jehovah was not merely acquainted with him, but chose him because he knew him. He realized that God had set him apart for a special task. He did not become a prophet because he wanted to, but because One whose authority was absolute had assigned him a mission and a duty" (John Gardner).

Jeremiah shrinks from the call, and hesitates. "Ah, Lord Jehovah!" he exclaims, "Behold I know not how to speak; for I am a child." The same Hebrew word here translated "child" is translated "young man" in Genesis 14.24. He was not a child in years, but he lacked experience, he was unprepared for so great a task.

"To have passing flashes of spiritual insight and heavenly aspiration is one thing; to undertake now, in the actual present, the course of conduct which they unquestionably indicate and involve, is quite another. And so, when the hour of spiritual illumination has passed, the darkness may and often does become deeper than before" (J. C. Ball).

"Say not, I am a child," comes back the word from Jehovah; "for to whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go, and whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak." It was to be no mission of his own on which he should set forth: he was

to be but the agent of the divine will. "But not afraid of them; for I am with thee to deliver thee."

In many a character of the Bible we see a timid man made courageous, a shy man made bold, a weak man made strong. Natural frailties can be transformed and made into spiritual abilities. When God calls, he enables (Heb. 13.6).

"Then Jehovah put forth his hand," says Jeremiah, "and touched my mouth; and Jehovah said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth." Jeremiah does not say that he saw a vision, but that the unseen hand of power touched his mouth and at the same time he was assured that the words he should speak would be the words God would have him speak. In accordance with oriental habit, the prophet is here describing in figurative language what could not otherwise be described, the communion of his human spirit with the Divine Spirit.

"The case of Jeremiah illustrates one of God's constant principles: never to entrust his servants with tasks which are beyond their powers if they will but take advantage of that divine inspiration which is ever at their command" (Westminster Commentary).

Jeremiah was set over nations and kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down and destroy and to overthrow (cumulative expressions for the task of denouncing the sins of the people) and also to build and to plant (to lead them to repentance and restoration). He saw that his task was twofold—to destroy and to reconstruct. He must strive to make the people give up their vices and weaknesses which were making for international corruption and for political destruction, and to implant in their hearts new ideals of righteousness. "What a conviction this for a young man to reach, that he is the man called by destiny to the sublimest task to which any human being can be called—the task of uplifting the moral life of his generation!"

Jeremiah's reluctance was overcome. He recognized the divine imperative. "Thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed," he once exclaimed, Jeremiah 20.7. Well does George Adam Smith speak of him as "this projectile of a man, fired upon a hostile world with a force not his own."

II. RESTORATION OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL PROMISED, 31.27, 28. It was a time of great anxiety in Jerusalem. The city was in the grip of famine and pestilence, and Jeremiah himself was a prisoner. Yet under these circumstances "the prophet of woe," as Jeremiah is often called, issued a cheering, hopeful message. The love of Jehovah would manifest itself in the restoration. In Chapters 30 to 33 the prophet assures the people that they shall not perish, that through them Gentile nations shall be led to a knowledge of the true God.

Upon the restoration of Judah and Israel the dwindling numbers will be recruited: "with a sowing more gracious and fortunate than that of Cadmus, Jehovah will scatter over the land, not dragon's teeth, but the seed of man and beast." And then, recurring to Jeremiah's commission, Jer. 1.10, Jehovah promises that as he has watched over Judah to pluck up and to break down, to overthrow and to destroy and to afflict, so now he will watch over them to build and to plant.

III. INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR SIN, 31.29, 30. The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge, was a proverb current among the Jews by which they expressed their thought that the responsibility for the sins of one generation could be laid at the door of the preceding generation. The people of Jeremiah's day were complaining that they were being punished, not for their own sins but for the sins of those before them. Everyone shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge—by this figure Jeremiah expressed the thought that each one will be held accountable for his own sins, that he cannot put the blame upon some one else. Ezekiel (18.19, 20) states the truth more directly: "Yet say ye, wherefore doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them; he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, it shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."

"The most important thought that ever occupied my mind was that of my individual responsibility to God" (Daniel Webster).

IV. THE NEW COVENANT, 31.31-33. There will be a new basis of religion, a new covenant will be made, different from that made with the children of Israel at Sinai, that covenant which they had broken, although Jehovah had been true. The new covenant will be written upon their hearts, not upon stone. "When the Hebrew said *heart* he did not think of the emotions, but of the thought, the purpose, the will, the whole mind of man. There, at the center of his own personal life, the covenant was to be enshrined." The bond between the people and God was to be permanent: I will be their God and they shall be my people.

"This is the greatest prophetic passage in the Old Testament. It implies that the Old Covenant, that is, the Covenant of Sinai, had failed. A New Covenant was to take its place, and this new covenant was to be inscribed upon the hearts of men and not upon tables of stone. The external had proved itself insufficient, the internal should replace it. But there is still more behind these words. It is implied in and supported by the general content of Jeremiah's message that the hearts of men were to be transformed so that they should be willing to receive the new law and covenant, and have the will to do it" (Robert W. Rogers).

"Let us tell over again these I wills for our comfort when days are dark, and claim their realization in our experience" (F. B. Meyer).

V. INDIVIDUAL RELIGION, 31.34. All shall know God, and no one shall have the exclusive knowledge of him to impart to the others; for the sin, which had been a barrier between them and God, will be forgiven.

"In ancient times men could only 'know Jehovah' and ascertain his will by resorting to some sanctuary, where the priests preserved and transmitted the sacred tradition and delivered the divine oracles. Written codes scarcely altered the situation; copies would be few and far between, and still mostly in the custody of the priests. Whatever drawbacks arise from attaching supreme religious authority to a printed book were multiplied a thousandfold when codes could only be copied. But, in the New Israel, men's spiritual life would not be at the mercy of scribe and priest. The man who had a book and could read would no longer be able, with the self-importance of exclusive knowledge, to bid his less fortunate brethren to know Jehovah. Jehovah himself would be the one Teacher, and his instruction would fall, like the sunshine and the rain, upon all hearts alike" (W. H. Bennett).

"If Roman and Greek orthodoxy interposes the Church between the soul and Christ, yet the inspiration claimed for the Church today is, at any rate in some measure, that of the living Spirit of Christ speaking to the souls of living men. The Reformers established the right of private judgment in the interpretation of the Scriptures; and the interpretation of the Library of Sacred Literature, the spiritual harvest of a thousand years, affords ample scope for reverent development of our knowledge of God" (W. H. Bennett).

"The covenant consists in a loving personal relation to God, based on forgiveness and mutual confidence. 'I will be their God, and they shall be my people'—a people that now do the works of the Law, not of constraint, but willingly—for the love of God moves them to obedience. The prophet has here advanced almost to the Christian standpoint. 'For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit,' Romans 8.3" (A. R. Gordon).

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Jeremiah was called to be a prophet in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign, 626 B. C., when about twenty-three years of age. It was the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign, some five years later, that the Book of the Law was found and the reformation was instituted by the king.

Jeremiah prophesied during the reigns of Josiah, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah, years of rising and falling kingdoms and, after the death of Josiah, of political dependence, trouble and tragedy for Judah. We lose sight of Jeremiah when he was carried off to Egypt following the capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 B. C.

A few years after the death of Josiah, Jeremiah committed to writing the substance of his preaching, and King Jehoiakim destroyed the roll, cutting it up and burning it

in a brazier before him. Jeremiah rewrote it and added other matter, which has come down to us in the Book of Jeremiah.

With the exception of the years immediately following Josiah's reign, idolatry flourished in Judah, covetousness, false dealing, and ill treatment of the poor prevailed, and against these evils Jeremiah fearlessly took his stand as "a fortified city, and an iron pillar, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land," Jer. 1.18.

During the eleven years of Jehoiakim's reign and the three months of his son, Jehoiachin, we have vivid pictures of the prophet engaged in his ministry and unusual revelations of the deep inner struggles through which he passed. From Professor Fowler's account of The Prophets as Statesmen and Preachers, the following is condensed:

We see him standing in the court of the temple, warning the worshipers who have come thither from the cities of Judah; we see him at the temple gate, denouncing the false confidence of those who trust in the sanctuary as a defense while they are guilty of moral and religious wrongs. In this period, plots against the life of the prophet are rife, even among the men of his native Anathoth. At times, bitter persecution calls from him fierce prayers for vengeance upon those who have plotted against him while he has been seeking their good. In his despair, he turns even upon Jehovah himself who has set him as a prophet of doom, making him a laughing-stock and his message a reproach. From rebellion his mood passes to confident trust that Jehovah will defend him from those who watch to entrap him, and will bring vengeance upon them.

In this period Jeremiah often teaches through symbolic acts and vivid illustrations. A fresh girdle, buried in a distant land and then brought back marred, is the symbol of captivity. The plotter, shaping the clay at will, becomes the type of the ruler of nations. Taking advantage of the presence of a company of Rechabites in Jerusalem, Jeremiah offers them wine to drink. They steadfastly adhere to the command of abstinence, given long before by the founder of their tribe, and the prophet is able to draw a telling contrast, unfavorable to faithless Judah. It is during this second period of his ministry that Jeremiah commits the substance of his earlier preaching to writing. Thus, by every possible means, by preaching where the people congregate, by symbolic action and by writing, the prophet delivers his message to his generation. Standing alone against false prophets, priests and rulers, ridiculed, forbidden to teach, locked in the cruel stocks, with his very life in constant danger, his sensitive, almost feminine heart shrank and quivered before his fate. He loved his people to whom he became an alien and a hated enemy; he rebelled against his mission; in passion he called for vengeance or turned and accused his God; yet he went forth from his hours of weakness and rebelliousness to the duties of a prophet called to a mission of tragedy, which seems almost to prefigure that of Jesus of Nazareth.

During this period, the interest of the prophet is divided between the exiles in Babylon and the people left in Jerusalem. He instructs those in exile by letter, but the desperate folly of those left behind in Judea calls forth his most constant energies, in a vain effort to check its course.

The weak king, Zedekiah, who seems, at times, disposed to listen to the warnings and advice of Jeremiah, is unable to protect the prophet from the hatred of the nobles, who, during the last siege of Jerusalem, secure his arrest and imprisonment on a false charge of desertion to the Chaldeans. Jeremiah's persistence in declaring the certainty of Chaldean dominance, finally leads the exasperated nobles to let him down into an empty cistern, there to sink in the mire at the bottom, and to starve. From this extremity he is rescued by permission of the king, and remains a prisoner till Jerusalem is captured.

According to one, his countrymen in Egypt stoned to death the faithful prophet, but another has it that he escaped to Babylon, and there died.

During these last hopeless years, Jeremiah's message was not wholly one of siege, famine and exile. The prophet looked beyond the long years of coming exile to the day when he that scattered Israel would gather him and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock. He held firm faith that, when calamities had shown human help useless, Jehovah would bring back his people to their own land. During the years when the breaking of the written covenant was bringing its full measure of judgment, Jeremiah saw a day when a new covenant should be made; and this was the new covenant, that the law should be written in their hearts, so that no more any man should need to teach another, saying, Know Jehovah; for they should all know him

from the least unto the greatest. To the heart-sick, weary prophet whose fate it was to stand alone, while his nation went madly on to her ruin, came, thus, out of the depths of despair, a clear, divine light revealing the spiritual character of true religion, as no other light revealed it till Christ himself taught among men.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Beginning the Lesson

Of each of King Josiah's successors—Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoichin and Zedekiah —it is said that they did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah. The people followed in their train. During his career of more than forty years the prophet Jeremiah saw many changes in Israel. He witnessed the religious reformation under the leadership of Josiah, and then saw its moral effect pass away with the death of that king. He realized that the nation could not be made righteous by law, and that the real remedy lay, not in the old covenant written upon stone but in the new covenant written upon the hearts of men.

Rénan, the French skeptic, who had little praise for many great Bible characters, said of the prophet Jeremiah: "Before John the Baptist, he was the one man who contributed most to the foundation of Christianity. In spite of the distance of his time, he ought to be counted among the immediate precursors of Jesus." The greatest contribution of Jeremiah we see in the excerpt from his writings which we study today.

First we have his call to be a prophet. (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

Why Jeremiah is Entitled to the Supreme Place in Hebrew Prophecy

The influence of his life on posterity is a striking example of the power of great ideas, once they have entered the world by the conquest of a human soul. It is probable that Jeremiah's sufferings have largely shaped that ideal for the nation which is enshrined in Isaiah 53, whilst the contemporaries of Jesus were ready to see in him a returning Jeremiah (Mt. 16.14). Along this line of personal realization of truth, rather than that of its formulation into explicit doctrine, lies Jeremiah's particular contribution to religion. In him, as never before, religion became individual, spiritual, intimate, warm with the lifeblood of a loving and sympathetic heart. The supreme interest of his prophecies springs from the scattered autobiographical fragments which tell of his call (1.4-10), his mission (1.11-19), his anxious sympathies (4.19; 8.18+; 3.17; 23.9), his awestruck sense of Jehovah's power (4.23-26), his lonely sorrows (15.10-21), and the divine compulsion which kept him to his task in spite of its difficulty (20.7-18). Such passages do not merely throw a light on the nature of the prophetic consciousness which we gain nowhere else so clearly and fully; they constitute, in their simplicity and sincerity, a new revelation of religion as personal fellowship with God. This finds clearest articulation in the prophecy of the new covenant (31.31-34) conceived as an inner personal relation to God, in contrast with dependence on the temple and its worship (7.4), and with conformity to an external written law. In other words, he anticipates the time when all Israel shall share his own prophetic consciousness of fellowship with God.—H. Wheeler Robinson.

The Idea which Jeremiah Combated

This emphasis on the individual seems commonplace enough to us today, but in the teaching of Jeremiah it marked a far advance in the understanding of true religion. The older idea in Israel, and in the earlier history of all peoples, for that matter, was that the community, family, tribe, or nation, was the essential, and that individuals did not count as against the importance of the groups. Individuals did not think of themselves as of worth apart from the group to which they belonged. In some of the older nations it might almost seem as if the common blood flowing through the veins of all individuals alike was the essential, and that the individuals had no more consequence than branches on a tree or leaves on a branch. In some non-Christian lands today we find subsequently this same belief. The group is all-important. In China, for example, the family is the social unit, and "family" in the Chinese sense might mean a group of families in the American sense, for it often happens that the head of a Chinese family will be a grandparent or a great-grandparent, and the family

will consist of all the descendants of that grandparent clustered together in one household. The earnings of the group go into a common treasury; and the group is responsible for the misdoings of any individual and entitled to the credit of the noteworthy achievements of any member. Now this conception which obtains in China today is enough like the old Jewish conception to enable us to understand something of the revolutionary nature of Jeremiah's change of emphasis.—Francis J. McConnell, in The Church School Journal.

Where the Law Is not Written in the Heart

The physical life of the Tyrolese is fine and strong. But intellectually, religiously, socially, they belong to the Middle Ages. Little change or progress has come to them in three hundred years. They are stagnant and backward. Why? There is just one explanation. They remained in the backwash at the time of Europe's Protestant awakening. Priestcraft held them in an iron vise. And even today the priests rule them with an iron hand through the power of superstitious ignorance passed on from one generation to another. The law there is not in the individual hearts of the people, leading them to co-operate for mutual growth and development. The law is in the hands of the priests. It would be a happy revolution which would snatch away that centralized power and diffuse it among the people.—Frederick B. Fisher, in The Church School Journal.

Jeremiah's Message for Today

If Jeremiah were in the Senate of the United States, he would not vote for a resolution declaring that the Philippians are and of right ought to be free and independent; he would say, "Let us have a public school and let us have a church. Let us have that which will make these people intelligent and righteous and just." Never are a people free, and never are they independent until they are intelligent, and until they are just. The public school system and the free gospel run their roots back to Jeremiah. He taught some principles which the United States needs to learn even today. We have tried to make the Negro free and independent by saying that he was so; now we are beginning to learn that each Negro must himself become a man before he is fit for the prerogatives of manhood. Manhood suffrage, yes; but manhood first and suffrage afterward.

Individualism, spirituality, religion founded on ritual, no temple, no law—on the heart of man transformed by the indwelling God—this is Jeremiah's message.—Lyman Abbott, 1895.

A New Emphasis on Personality

The progress of doctrine in the Bible is toward the fuller recognition of personality. From the tribe to the individual, from a group consciousness to a personal experience, from a vague recognition of gods many and lords many to the discovery of one Infinite God, from a Messianic nation or a group within the nation to the expectation of a coming Savior, the trend is toward the recognition of the individual man. The prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, written after the nation and the national church had collapsed, were significant in their individualism. Jesus was not a committee, nor an association, but a man.

In the last generation there has been strong emphasis on the social aspects of religion. It has been salutary, and the time has not yet come to call upon it to halt. We cannot afford to forget for a moment the social aspects of our faith. But there is very great need also of a new emphasis on personal responsibility. The religion of the Bible is the religion of a personal righteousness and a personal immortality.

Viscount James Bryce has said truly that America's greatest peril is the loss of a sense of personal responsibility in the movements of great masses of people. The herd mind is a menace to individual conscience. Over against this is the Bible admonition not to follow a multitude to do evil. No concession to the opinions of others, no mode or convention, can justify any man or woman in a course of action that to him or her is morally wrong. No book more fully than the Bible recognizes the significance of social life in spiritual concerns; and no book so emphatically affirms the privilege and duty of every man to obey his own conscience.

No bonding company in this world or in the world to come can assume liability for our acts of personal wrong-doing, and no one else than ourselves is entitled to the satisfaction that comes from an honest endeavor to perform our own personal duty.

There are obligations that cannot be delegated. There are joys that legitimately belong to the individual who has a conscience void of offense.—The Youth's Companion.

For Bible Class Discussion

Jeremiah the thinker. See chapter with this title in Cardinal Ideas of Jeremiah, by Charles E. Jefferson.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Read the Book of Jonah through as though it were actual history; then read it again as an allegory or parable: which is the more satisfactory to your reason and to your faith? 2. As a story is it true to life? 3. What is its great message? 4. Wherein lay the supremacy of the Jews? 5. How did the prophets teach that this was a trusteeship, not a possession?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
BEING OBEDIENT TO GOD

Beginning the Lesson

Jeremiah's father was a priest, but there was little or nothing of the priest about Jeremiah. He was, as Professor Rogers states, "a prophet through and through, inside and out, and the greatest of them all." His youth was spent in the quiet surroundings of a small village, yet in the best of company. "Boys are sometimes deeply influenced for life by the company that surrounds their fathers and by the conversation heard or overheard. There would be good talk in Jeremiah's house, earnest talk of priests about the things of God and much discussion of affairs of state —good things for a clever, growing boy to hear. And the city of holy and stately memories, Jerusalem the magical, was only a short walk away, and Jeremiah must have seen it often in his boyhood. The impression it made upon that quick and responsive boyish mind may well be inferred from the intensity of his devotion to the city in later life."

How long had Josiah reigned when Jeremiah was called to be a prophet? When convinced that God had called him to this office, how did Jeremiah respond? How was he convinced that he could, after all, take up the hard task?

For I Am with thee to Deliver thee

Near the middle of the last century, David Brainerd had heard of a savage tribe in the heart of the New Jersey forests, and yearned to bring them under Christian influences. He pushed on through the wilderness till he found himself near their village and stopped to rest and fortify himself for the new undertaking before him.

When he finally reached the wigwams, he was an astonished man. His faith and hope had made him bold, but he little expected when he faced the enemies of his race that a "whole village" would come out to meet him as if he had been a long-looked-for friend. Led by their chief, the Indians welcomed him as their guest, and seemed almost to reverence him as a prophet. He stayed among them and preached, winning the hearts and the faith of the untutored natives, until he gathered a church of between seventy and eighty Christian Indians.

Brainerd never knew, until they told him, the secret of his welcome. The savages had discovered the white stranger in the woods, and a party of them had waited to steal upon him and kill him as soon as he entered his tent. Peering between the folds of the canvas, they saw him on his knees, praying.

Ignorant wonder held them back, and their wonder turned to awe when they saw a rattlesnake crawl over the stranger's feet and pause beside him, with its head raised as if to strike; but it only gazed at him a moment, flickered its red tongue, and glided out of the tent on the opposite side. The Indians hurried back and reported that the white man was under the protection of the Great Spirit.

However much the superstition of these "children of nature" influenced their thought, they told a Christian truth in pagan version. It is certain that

Man is immortal till his work is done,

and God had work for Brainerd to do.—The Youth's Companion.

I have Put my Words in thy Mouth

Early in the seventeenth century there was a great struggle at the Westminster Assembly of Divines between the Presbyterians and the Independents and their

opponents, the Erastians, who wished that the church should be under the civil power. Selden, a brilliant lawyer, represented the Crown and made a fervent appeal that the authorities of the State should have control of the Church of Scotland. George Gillespie was observed writing on a piece of paper during the speech, evidently taking notes. When Selden sat down it was thought by all that the cause for the Church was lost. Samuel Rutherford urged Gillespie to speak in defense of the Church. He obeyed and made so impassioned an appeal with such powerful arguments for the right of every one to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience, that he won the day. "In a few moments," Selden afterwards told him, "you have undone eight years' work. For eight years I studied, preparing this argument, and by your brilliant effort you have made it have no effect."

The people round about Rutherford searched for the note which he was observed to throw down when he made his speech. At last it was found and eagerly scanned. It held but three Latin words: *Da lucem, Domine*: God, give me light. This was the secret of his power.

Difficulties Should Drive us to God

Said a boy at work removing stones that were piled up in the garden, "There's one here, father, that I can't lift. I've tried with all my might and I can't lift it."

"No, my boy, you haven't tried with all your might," returned his father, "for I am here as a part of your might, and you didn't ask me to help you."

Difficulties should not cause us to give up. They should cause us to put forth all our powers to overcome them, and a part of our power is in the help that God gives us.

Being Obedient to God

A very large salary was once offered to a young man to undertake a new kind of work which he believed to be wicked. Yet the salary was so tempting that he hesitated to refuse the position. His mother, in her distress, asked her minister for his help. The clergyman was unusually serious when he saw the young man.

"Jack," he began, "you do believe that over the universe there is an infinite God who is all we can imagine of goodness, and intelligence, and love, don't you?"

"Why, Doctor Brown," Jack answered with conviction, "of course I do; almost everyone believes that."

"Then if there is," continued the clergyman, "at every step of the way through life, there is something God wants each one of us to do."

"I suppose that follows," returned the young man.

"If that is so," continued the minister, "does anything else in the world matter? Suppose, for example, that God Almighty should suddenly now appear before you in unmistakable, visible form, and by word of mouth should tell you that he wanted you to do some particular thing? Suppose he should say, 'I want you, John Graham, to do this thing'? Suppose that doing what he asked should cost you a very great deal of money and oblige you to give up a very dear ambition? Would these considerations keep you from doing just what God had told you to do?"

"I hope not," said Jack. "There could be only one thing for me to do in such circumstances as those."

Doctor Brown's face was stern as he leaned toward the young man. "Jack Graham, if God should so appear before you and tell you by word of mouth, would you be one whit more certain than you are today about what he wants you to do in regard to that position that has been offered you?"

The young man sat staring at his rector. That night he declined the position.—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermon

The glory is not in the task, but in
The doing it for Him.—Jean Ingelow.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. How many books are there in the group of Minor Prophets? 2. Name them. 3. Read the entire story of the Book of Jonah. 4. Of what nation was Nineveh the capital? 5. What were the lessons that God taught Jonah? 6. What great lesson for you do you see in the story?

JONAH (The Narrow Nationalist Rebuked)

GOLDEN TEXT: Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him. Acts 10.34, 35

LESSON Read the Book of Jonah DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 139.7-12

JONAH 3.1 And the word of Jehovah came unto Jonah the second time, saying, 2 Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. 3 So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of Jehovah. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city, of three days' journey. 4 And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

5 And the people of Nineveh believed God; and they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil which he said he would do unto them; and he did it not.

4.1 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. 2 And he prayed unto Jehovah, and said, I pray thee, O Jehovah, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I hasted to flee unto Tarshish; for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. 3 Therefore now, O Jehovah, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live. 4 And Jehovah said, Doest thou well to be angry? 5 Then Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shade, till he might see what would become of the city.

6 And Jehovah God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to deliver him from his evil case. So Jonah was exceeding glad because of the gourd. 7 But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd, that it withered. 8 And it came to pass, when the sun arose, that God prepared a sultry east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and requested for himself that he might die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live. 9 And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death. 10 And Jehovah said, Thou hast had regard for the gourd, for which thou hast not labored, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: 11 and should not I have regard for Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. JONAH'S DISOBEDIENCE, chapters 1 and 2. See the Historical Background. "Whenever we are conscious of an urgent voice which says to us, over and over, 'You ought! You ought,' it is likely that we are listening to the word of the Lord. It was thus that the word of the Lord came to Jonah telling him that he ought to go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach there the message that God bade him. Instead of obeying the voice, Jonah went in the opposite direction, the story tells us. At Joppa he found a ship bound for Tarshish (the Phœnician colony on the southern coast of Spain, then regarded as the very end of the earth), and went aboard it. A violent storm arose, the sailors concluded that some one had offended his god, and they cast lots to discover the culprit. The lot fell upon Jonah, who acknowledged his guilt, and advised them to throw him into the sea. Finding the effort to row back to land unavailing, the sailors prayed to Jehovah and then reluctantly cast Jonah overboard. The sea ceased from its raging, and the sailors offered sacrifice to Jehovah. A great fish swallowed Jonah, and after three days cast him out upon dry land.

"A wrongdoer is often a man who has left something undone, and not always he that has done something" (Marcus Aurelius).

II. JONAH'S TARDY OBEDIENCE, 3.1-4. A second time Jonah received the same commission, "for it is God's custom when he gives a servant a command to do a definite duty, and the servant disobeys, and, by the goodness of his God after his fall and repentance is brought back to himself and to readiness to obey, that the old command is invariably repeated." This time Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, a great city, so great that it was a three days' journey around it. "A day's journey" may be taken as twenty miles. See The Geographical Background. Entering the city, Jonah proclaimed the message God had given him: "Yet forty

days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." The prophet Nahum describes Nineveh as "a bloody city, full of lies and robbery." This was a perfectly congenial message for Jonah, Dr. McFarland thinks. "Only fear prevented him at first from going with that message with gladness. He contemplated the threatened destruction with pleasure. It was to him perfectly natural that Jehovah should destroy the Ninevites. Jehovah, he assumed, hated them and would desire their destruction."

III. THE REPENTANCE AND PARDON OF THE NINEVITES, 3.5-10. All in Nineveh believed that Jonah spoke the truth, believed that God would destroy their city. All fasted and put on sackcloth: see Light from Oriental Life. Impressive details about the king's mourning are recorded. The change from throne and royal attire to a seat in the ashes and a covering of sackcloth portrays strikingly "the mental change from pride to penitence." He issued a decree that beast as well as man should fast and be covered with sackcloth. Neglected by their owners, the cattle filled the air with their cries. Compare Joel 1.20. "Let them cry mightily unto God," the king decreed; "yes, let them turn everyone from his evil way, and from the violence that is in his hands." "Even the Assyrian idolater is represented as realizing the essential requirements of the God of the Hebrews" (Carl Eiselen). "Perhaps God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not," said the king, speaking of God in terms that would befit man.

God saw the repentance of Nineveh, and "did not the evil which he said he would do unto them," for his purpose in sending Jonah was fulfilled.

There's a wideness in God's mercy
Like the wideness of the sea.
There's a kindness in his justice,
Which is more than liberty.
For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind (Faber).

IV. AN ANGRY PROPHET, 4.1-4. "Here was a triumph for Jonah—alone, and with no human help, he had terrified and converted the greatest city in the world. Even egotism, if humanized by benevolence, could have found gratification in this. But poor Jonah was all egotism." The pardoning of the Ninevites displeased him exceedingly, and he was angry. He told God that the reason he had first fled to Tarshish was because he knew God to be gracious, merciful, slow to anger, abundant in lovingkindness, and his prophecy would be brought to naught for God would repent and not fulfill it. And then he begged that he might die. "Doest thou well to be angry?" questioned Jehovah.

"I reckon Jehovah was right, givin' Jonah a second chance; an' I reckon he was right givin' them Nineveh sinners a second chance; an' I hope he gives me a second chance. An' as fer Jonah, I believe in him, pesky mean as he was, because he's so darn human" (W. O. Stoddard, Jr.).

V. THE PROPHET REBUKED, 4.6-11. Still unwilling to believe in divine mercy, Jonah erected a booth for himself east of Nineveh and sat under its shade to see what would become of the city. The booth was constructed of branches whose leaves withered, but a gourd quickly sprang up and its living leaves afforded him grateful shelter.

The gourd was eaten by a worm, and it withered, and then the sirocco from the desert of burning sand blew over him, and he fainted and again prayed that he might die. "It is better for me to die than to live," again he cried. Recall Elijah's wish for death, 1 Kings 19.

"Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd?" said God to Jonah. "I do well to be angry, even unto death," was Jonah's violent retort. His pride as a prophet was hurt, and he was indignant that "heathen Ninevites" should receive mercy from Israel's God. When Job was overwhelmed with great afflictions, and was told by his wife to "Renounce God and die," he answered. "What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"

"Jonah was exceeding glad because of the gourd. When the gourd withered and dried away, Jonah's gladness dried up also. If his heart had gone back of the gourd to its Sender, and had learned from it the goodness of a

loving Father, he would not have lost his joy with the fading of this one illustration of infinite love. But are there not many hearts whose peace depends, not on God's presence which never fails, but on the presence of things which may fail?" (Cleland B. McAfee).

Then said Jehovah to him: "Thou hast had regard for the gourd, for which thou hast not labored, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night and perished in a night; ("a child of a night, so the Hebrew"); and should not I have regard for Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand (little children); and also much cattle?"

"The gourd and the people of Nineveh—who would compare them? And yet are there no mothers more concerned about their dogs than their children?" (R. Bruce Taylor).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Put on sackcloth, 3.5. The mourning dress, sackcloth, was in truth a sack which was thrown over the person and extended down to the knees, but which, nevertheless, had armholes for the admission of the arms. It derives its name from the Arabic verb *to tear asunder,* because in the moment of the person's grief it was torn from the neck down to the breast, and sometimes as far as the girdle. The material was a coarse, dark cloth of goat's hair.—B. A. John.

It displeased Jonah exceedingly, 4.1. Take the oriental churches of today. Centuries of oppression have created in them an awful hatred of the infidel, beneath whose power they are hardly suffered to live. That their oppressors share a common humanity with themselves is a sense they have nearly lost. For centuries they have had no spiritual intercourse with them; to try to convert a Mohammedan has been for 1200 years a capital crime. It is not wonderful that Eastern Christians should have long lost power to believe in the conversion of infidels, and to feel that anything is due but their destruction. I once asked a cultured and devout layman of the Greek Church, "Why, then, did God create so many Mohammedans?" The answer came hot and fast—"To fill up Hell!"—George Adam Smith, in The Minor Prophets.

God prepared a worm, 4.7. On warm days when a small rain falls, black caterpillars are generated in great numbers on this plant, which in one night so suddenly and so often cut off its leaves that only their bare ribs remain; which I have often observed with much wonder, as if it were a copy of that destruction of old Nineveh.—Pusey, quoted by Eiselen.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The time of the Book of Jonah has been assigned by scholars as the period following the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah, when Jewish narrowness had grown intense. The little group of returned exiles made every effort to strengthen themselves in the land against the peoples of many races with whom Canaan had been filled by the Babylonians. The putting away of the Gentile wives among them was enjoined, and in every possible way their exclusiveness was intensified. In such a time as this there came to the prophet who wrote the Book of Jonah a marvelous revelation of the fact that Jehovah is God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews, and of the call of the Jews to make him known to the Gentiles. These truths he taught his countrymen in connection with a parable about the prophet Jonah.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, was on the Tigris River six hundred miles from the Gulf of Persia. Opposite Mosul, the well-known emporium of trade on the right bank of the Upper Tigris, two high, artificial mounds now lift themselves from

the otherwise level plain. The more northerly takes the name of Kuyunjik, or "little lamb," after the Turkish village which couches pleasantly upon its northeastern slope. The other is called in the popular dialect Nebi Yunus, "Prophet Jonah," after a mosque dedicated to him, but the official name is Nineveh. These two mounds are bound to each other on the west by a broad brick wall, with a circumference in all of about nine English miles. The interval, including the mounds, was covered with buildings, whose ruins will enable us to form some idea of what was for centuries the wonder of the world. Upon terraces and superstructures of enormous breadth rose storied palaces, arsenals, barracks, libraries, and temples. A lavish water system spread in all directions from canals, with massive embankments and sluices. Gardens were lifted into mid-air, filled with rich plants and rare and beautiful animals. Alabaster, silver, gold, and precious stones relieved the dullness of brick and flashed sunlight from every frieze and battlement. The surrounding walls were so broad that chariots could roll abreast on them. The gates, and especially the river gates, were very massive.

Ruins of the Massive North Wall of Mosul, Ancient Nineveh

All this was Nineveh proper, whose glory the Hebrews envied and over whose fall more than one of their prophets exult. But this was not the Nineveh to which our author saw Jonah come. Beyond the walls were great suburbs, and beyond the suburbs other towns, league upon league of dwellings, so closely set upon the plain as to form one vast complex of population, which is known to Scripture as "The Great City." To judge from the ruins which still cover the ground, the circumference must have been about sixty miles, or three days' journey.—Dr. George Adam Smith, in The Minor Prophets.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

If adult classes have read the Book of Jonah through twice, in the way indicated last week under Questions to Think About, they will be ready for the right interpretation of the book and its lessons. In younger classes teachers may wisely begin by a talk about the use which Jesus made of the parable, and the fact that the Old Testament had parables as well.

That a parable story is not always so labeled in the Bible is not an indication that it was intended for actual history. Jesus referred to the story of Jonah, for he could make use of it in much the same way as does a preacher today of the story of Pilgrim's Progress.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

PATRIOTISM AND WORLD BROTHERHOOD

Beginning the Lesson

The Christian Century had an interesting article a few years ago entitled The Blessed Day of our Neighbors' Destruction. "Why do so many people cherish hopes of the speedy end of the world? And why should these prophets of disaster be disappointed and chagrined at the frustration of their oracle?" the editorial questions, and continues: "It is not an affair of idle or incidental interest. Our religious life is shot through with the spirit which fosters this type of millennialism. It is not alone the fantastic and eccentric sects in which dwells this strange desire to share the eternal bliss of abandoning their unbelieving neighbors to their doom.

Only a year ago certain leaders of the regular orthodox churches gathered a crowd of 15,000 people in Madison Square Garden, New York, and induced them to applaud predictions of the nearby end, direful to all but the elect.

"Why is it that so many use God to do work to which they would consider it a defilement to put their hands? None of them would, even in their most frenzied moments, sally forth to shed the blood of their unbelieving neighbors. But they expect God to do it for them. They contemplate the event as to the vindication of his and their own righteousness. Lurid descriptions of havoc and slaughter, attending the end of the world and the judgment of the wicked, vastly entertain great congregations of 'believers' in this very day of grace, and in this God-blessed land of ours.

"Hudson Maxim, in his biography, tells of incidents connected with the Millerite movement of his childhood. Lucinda, among the faithful, was peeved by the overshadowing popularity of her rival Rebecca, also among the faithful. On the fateful night when the end was to come, she climbed, in her white robe, to the ridge-pole of the house. From this vantage-point, when the overzealous bell-ringer prematurely pulled the rope to announce the actual arrival of the Lord of glory, she leaped out into the unsustaining atmosphere with the cry, 'Take me, Jesus; take me ahead of that old Beck Adams!' Is there a streak of Lucinda's jealousy running through all the millennial hopes? Do they want unbelievers destroyed because they shamelessly decline to believe what we want them to believe? Are they so peeved because what they esteem to be unrighteousness does not work the speedy destruction of the wicked, that they must call upon an omnipotent God arbitrarily to vindicate our scouted preachments?"

This reference to beliefs and desires in our own land brings close home to us the lesson of the story of Jonah, who desired the destruction of the Ninevites. The story is familiar to us all.

How God Looks at Cities

To Jonah, Nineveh was very much what Berlin was during the war to Britons, or London to Germans—a city that might be bombed without any thought of the human beings upon whom the bombs would fall. It was not a scene of human life with its sorrows and joys, its longings and its dreams. It was a place on the map; a military stronghold; a center of statecraft.

The disciples of Jesus once begged that fire might come down upon a village of the Samaritans. It was a village—a collection of houses—a thing. "Ye know not what spirit ye are of," the Master replied. "The Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives but to save them." To Jesus the village meant "men's lives," each dear to God. Though the mind of the Savior is plain, we are often tempted to regard villages of other lands, where we are not beloved, as negligible. And in time of a stress even our spiritual guides can call down vengeance on Samaritans.

But what is the condition of mind and heart which makes this possible? We can hate men when we have not learned to know them. We can hate nations and even cities. We can dispose of them in judgment and surrender them to the burning, but only as long as we do not see in them human beings each with its worth to God. We can go on hating or ignoring strangers, and strange nations, because we lack the princely gift of imagination, by means of which we bridge the gulfs between our life and that of others. Jonah saw Nineveh, but without the imagination which could reveal in it the little children, and the cattle going about their service to man.

The truth came to a seer in Israel that the Lord God saw in a heathen city little children and even cattle. How and when the revelation came we do not know, but of this we are sure, when we reach the closing words of this inspired book, we are not far below the shining tablelands of the New Testament. A God with such a vision as this will not stop there. At all costs he will make effective his compassion for the children of men.—Edward Shillito.

The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Men

The lessons of the Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of men are writ large in the Book of Jonah. Nowhere else in the Old Testament is there a broader conception of the tender mercy of God toward all mankind. Where the ignorant sailors, who in their terror at the storm had called on their gods, turned to Jehovah and promised to worship him, they were delivered. And when the wicked Ninevites

cried mightily unto Jehovah, and turned from their evil way, Jehovah delivered them. God's mercy and love extend alike to ignorant sailors, disobedient prophet, and wicked heathen—in a word, to all humanity. Divine pity and tenderness breathes throughout the story, but most of all in those beautiful closing words where they are given to the helpless children and animals in the city of Nineveh.

You have seen a double rainbow: the one bow bright and clear, the other back of it fainter and dimmer, but a beautiful reflection of the same glorious colorings. The Book of Jonah is the dimmer bow that nevertheless reflects the great truth so clearly seen in the bright bow of the Gospels, where we hear that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life.

Patriotism and World Brotherhood

The Jews never lost hold of their claim that the spiritual treasures they possessed in their thought of a moral God made them superior to the nations round about. There always were among them persons who thought of Judaism's moral superiority among the nations as a ground for contempt of those other nations. It was against this idea that the Book of Jonah was written. The Jews were not to think of themselves so much as possessors of religion but as its trustees.

Has not America a self-evidently clear manifest destiny? Is this destiny not written in the very terms of geography itself? Here is a nation set in between two world seas—far enough from Europe and Asia not to be unduly injured by them, and close enough to them to get whatever benefits they have to offer. Have we not great power in physical riches and in our high level of intelligence and in the loftiness of our ideals of democracy? All these we no doubt have; but the question is, What are we to do with all these treasures? If the cry becomes "America for Americans!" all these things will not be in our hands. We cannot be democratic if we embark on a course of national self-seeking. Democracy and self-seeking cannot go together. If we are to be self-seeking we must become imperialistic; and imperialism is the deadly foe of democracy. True wisdom does not go with national self-seeking. We ought not to forget that—with the awful events of the last years so fresh in mind. No; national opportunities are given to nations not just for the benefit of the favored nation; they are given in trusteeship for the whole world. This is especially true of the higher riches. The very attempt on the part of a Christian nation so to state its thought of God that a less favored nation may share that thought gives the teaching nation more grasp on the idea itself. The best way for nations to keep hold of their own ideals is to learn to state them clearly for the benefit of the whole world.

This is the Old Testament conception of internationalism at its highest expression—that the favored nation holds its highest riches for the benefit of the whole world.—Francis J. McConnell.

For Bible Class Discussion

Jonah's narrowness and ours.

My patriotism lives and flutters as a sentiment, unless I know that the land I live is really making, by its constant life, a contribution to the righteousness and progress of the world.—Phillips Brooks.

The universe is but one great city, full of beloved ones, divine and human.—Epictetus.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WHAT IS TRUE PATRIOTISM?

Beginning the Lesson

We are to think today about the story of Jonah. You notice I call it a story, for that is what it is. A long time ago people used to suppose it history, and that is why some people nowadays make fun of it. We never make fun of a story, no matter how many impossible and unbelievable things are told in it. Whoever made fun of Robinson Crusoe or Treasure Island or Little Red Riding Hood or Jack and the Bean Stalk or Alice in Wonderland? We never make fun of stories. We always make fun of a history filled with things that are impossible.

This is a story. It is a parable, just like the parable of the Prodigal Son. That is a short parable, only twenty-two verses long. This is longer, for it has forty-eight verses. It is an allegory just like the allegory of the Good Shepherd. The

Good Shepherd is a short allegory, having only eighteen verses, whereas the allegory of Jonah has nearly three times as many. It is not nearly so long, however, as the allegory which John Bunyan wrote, for that has many hundreds of verses. It is a satire like the satire of Gulliver's Travels. Gulliver's Travels is a satire on human nature, and Jonah is a satire on racial bigotry. In the story of Jonah everything comes out right. The disobedient hero finally obeys. He got himself into a lot of trouble, and other people into a lot of trouble, too, but finally he made up his mind that he might as well give in. That is always a sensible thing to do. Jonah tried to get to Tarshish, but he never arrived there. He went to Nineveh, where God told him to go.

And then the city repented. That is what a wicked city ought to do, but no city ever does that except in stories.—From a Sermon by Charles E. Jefferson.

Why the Story of Jonah was Written

It was written to show how big a fool a man can make of himself when he is full of religious prejudices, and how mean and contemptible a man can be and at the same time think that he is a very good man. The story was placed in the Bible, because for thousands of years the world will need to be warned against racial and religious bigotry, and will need to be reminded of the amazing breadth of God's love.

Jonah was a snob—a Jewish snob. He disliked foreigners and looked down on them. He did not care what became of them. He secretly wished that they were all dead. He was a hundred per cent. Jew. He felt deep contempt for all other races. He knew he had far more light than they had, but he was not willing to share it with them. He prided himself on possessing a knowledge of the true God, but he would take no trouble to give the knowledge to foreigners.

He was a hater. He hated Nineveh. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria, and Assyria had been for centuries the enemy of Jonah's country. There were reasons why Jonah might have been expected to despise Nineveh. She was luxurious and domineering and cruel, and the whole world stood in horror at her atrocities. Jonah hated her so intensely that he would have been glad to have her blotted out. There was a deep fear in his heart Nineveh would fail to get what was coming to her.

The possible death of a great city did not disturb him in the least, but he almost went crazy at the sight of a dying gourd. He was a peevish, grown-up baby, and the author of the story wanted everybody to see just how unreasonable and narrow-headed and despicable Jonah was.

The story is for the whole world. It is for us Americans. It is a message which God intends especially for us. No other nation needs it more than we do. These are the things which the story says to us: First, Do not be a snob. Do not look down on other nations. Do not sneer at Canadians or Mexicans or Cubans or Porto Ricans or Brazilians or Patagonians. Do not sniff at Italians or Russians or Poles or Chinese or Japanese, and do not call them ugly names. Black men and red men, brown men and yellow men are just as dear to God as white men. Other nations are as near to God as we Americans are. He loves other races just as dearly as he loves ours. Do not be a Jonah!

Second, do not hate any race or nation no matter what it may have done. Do not hate Austria or Hungary or Bulgaria or Germany or Turkey. Do not wish them to be destroyed. Do not be jealous of their prosperity or progress. Do not desire to keep them down. Do not be afraid that God will be too good to them. Remember Jonah. Beware of being like him.

Third, do not be disagreeable because you are uncomfortable. If you are disagreeable you will make other people uncomfortable, and if they are uncomfortable they may become disagreeable, too, and in this way you may make a very unhappy world. Do not mind the sun in your eyes. Think always of the work you have to do. Do not whimper over the wilted gourd vines which you will find all along your way. There are greater tragedies than withered gourd vines to weep over, and you must save your strength for things worth while. Do not be a fussy, cranky Jonah.

Fourth, believe in the lovingkindness and infinite tenderness of God. Here we come to the deepest and most precious teaching of the story. The author wanted to give the world a noble conception of God. Note how compassionate God is in his solicitude for Nineveh. In the New Testament we are told that when Jesus saw the multitude he was moved with compassion, and that when he looked upon Jerusalem he wept over it. So does God always feel compassionate when he

looks upon great cities with their ignorance and wickedness and misery. He pitied Nineveh because the city was so helpless.

The last sentence in the Book of Jonah is the highest point of revelation reached in the Old Testament. In that sentence you get a marvelous unveiling of God's heart. Standing on this sentence as on a mountain peak, you can easily look over into the New Testament country. You have come within sight of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.—Condensed from a Sermon by Charles E. Jefferson.

A Chinese Fable

A courtier once reported to his sovereign the misdeeds and disloyalty of various enemies to the throne, and urged upon him the necessity of destroying them. "Very well," said the king, "they shall be destroyed." And he ordered them to his presence. On their arrival he treated them with such courtesy and goodwill that they were ashamed of their ill-doing, and one and all rallied to him with enthusiasm. The courtier was astonished and aggrieved; "Did you not vow to destroy your enemies, O king?" "Indeed, yes," said the king; "where are my enemies? They exist no longer."

Reasonable Patriotism

Must a man forsake his mother in order to be true to all womankind? And must a man spiritually forsake his motherland in order to be genuinely gallant toward all other lands? Must a man refuse to do for his own children in order that he may love and help all childhood?

In the swing toward an ideal nationalism some men seem to feel that they must surrender all special attitudes toward their own country. Hence some men among us are now talking as if the way to prove your love for all peoples is to hate the United States. We claim that no man can be a good cosmopolite unless he is first a good patriot, even as he cannot be a good citizen if he is a bad father or son. The greater circle must always include the less. There is an argument of instinct for patriotism. It is natural to say, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem." The normal man in every land has his geographical loyalty that is subject only to his higher moral loyalty.

The cosmopolite and the patriot may readily be the same man. Lincoln and Washington are not less citizens of the world because they were Americans. Samuel Francis Smith, who wrote our best-known national hymn, "My Country, 'tis of Thee," wrote also our best-known missionary hymn, "The Morning Light is Breaking." That fact should be for us all a symbol, so that in gaining the love of humanity we shall not lose our love for that nearer relation that is represented by the Stars and Stripes.—Condensed from an Address by Hughes.

International Brotherhood

There is no real conflict between love of country and love of other countries, if our love is genuine. Some of us are very proud of the town we live in or the State we came from, those of us who come from Dixie or from Boston especially so, but that pride and loyalty do not make us any less loyal to the nation. So we shall see as a nation when we undertake our fair share of world responsibility that the surest way to love our own country, and keep it out of conflicts, is to keep steadily before our eyes world-wide love for the human brotherhood.

It is not the fulfilment of our patriotic duty to make America Christian. America, as a Christian nation, will never be such until the other nations and races also are Christian. If the nations of the earth cannot be Christian they will in time eat each other up and destroy themselves, as the World War and its underlying causes have clearly shown.

Make America Christian; make the world Christian. One's faith never outruns one's purpose. There is little sympathy for our brothers as long as our own responsibilities are light. Only those who bear big loads can be big brothers.—S. Earl Taylor, in The Church School.

Sentence Sermons

"Happy are all strong peoples, too strong to be dispossessed,
But blessed are those among nations, who dare to be strong for the rest."

Our country hath a gospel of her own to preach and practise before the world—the freedom and divinity of man, the glorious aims of universal brotherhood, and the soul's fealty to none but God.—James Russell Lowell.

REVIEW: The Greatness of the God-fearing

**GOLDEN TEXT: The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom;
A good understanding have all they that do his commandments:
His praise endureth forever. Psalm 111.10**

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 8

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

By questions recall the lesson to which each allusion refers.

In wonder-workings, or some bush aflame,
Men look for God and fancy him concealed;
But in earth's common things he stands revealed,
While grass and flowers and stars spell out his name.—Minot J. Savage.

So good a world—no rich, no poor, no gain nor loss, nor stint,
No pottage in it able to exclude a brother's birthright.—Browning.

"He who makes and counts the stars said: 'Behold their number; even so shall thy children be through the ages.' "

I do not hope with David's harp to chase the evil spirits from the troubled breast.—Keble.

His life is the tragedy of a man capable of nobility of character and of great service, who gave loose reins to his evil temper till his only ambition was to hunt and kill a man whom he hated.

It is when the hour of conflict is over that history comes to a right understanding of strife, and is ready to exclaim, "Lo! God is here, and we knew it not!"

My lonely gourd is withered in an hour!
I droop, I faint beneath the scorching sun.—Charlotte Elliott.

I pray God, Madam, that you may be as blessed within the commonwealth of Scotland, if it be the pleasure of God, as ever Deborah was in the commonwealth of Israel.—Knox to Queen Mary.

The life of faith ever begins as that of the Father of the Faithful began, with the solemn recognition of a Divine Will which separates.—Alexander Maclaren.

"We ought today to live in such a frame of spiritual expectancy, and to sleep with so good a conscience, that we shall dream of ladders to heaven, and, arising in the morn, consecrate our hopes anew to the divine service."

"The moment we move, the dog is after us. He says in effect, Where thou goest I will go."

Boy, avoid me today. I am in a black fit. The evil of King Saul is with me—is in me.—Stevenson.

REVIEW QUESTIONS UPON THE QUARTER'S LESSONS

For Young People and Adults

1. What qualities do you admire in Abraham?
2. What qualities in Jacob made him of value in the sight of God?
3. What is your estimation of Moses' character and ability?
4. How does Deborah compare with the other judges of Israel?
5. Is our country ready for women diplomats? Are there women ready for such an office?
6. To what period does the Book of Ruth belong?
7. What are the lessons of the Book of Ruth?
8. What did Israel owe Saul? What was the cause of his failure?
9. What qualities do you admire in Jonathan? In David?
10. What is a prophet?

11. What have you learned from the message of Amos?
12. What was Jeremiah's greatest contribution to our knowledge of God?
13. What is your interpretation of the Book of Jonah?
14. What were the mistakes of some of the representative men and women of these lessons?
15. What ideals of these characters are to be emulated?
16. What have you learned from the message of Amos?

For Intermediates and Seniors

1. With what Bible character does Hebrew history begin?
2. Where in the Bible is the story told of a woman who saved her people from the enemy?
3. What relation was David to Ruth?
4. Who was Jeremiah?
5. What characteristics do you admire in Ruth? In Naomi?
6. What man made a good start as king but ended badly, and to what was his failure due?
7. Who said, "Let there be no strife between me and thee"; why did he say it; what course did he offer?
8. Give one fact concerning each of the following: Barak, Rachel, Esau, Lot.
9. Mention three important facts about Abraham's life.
10. What is the name of Israel's greatest king: give two important facts about him.
11. Who was Josiah and what did he do?
12. Name the principal events in the life of Jacob.
13. Name two important prophets, and tell how God called them to their work.
14. What was the name of the woman who judged Israel and of the man who at her summons led the people to victorious battle?
15. Where will you find the story of the friendship of Jonathan and David?
16. How did it happen that a woman belonging to a foreign nation married a pious Israelite?
17. Give one fact concerning Jeremiah, Amos, Jonah.
18. Who was Hannah, and what did she do?
19. What did Moses do for his people?
20. Which character of the Quarter do you like best, and why?

WRITTEN WORK

For Young People and Adults

1. An Appreciation of Deborah.
2. An Appreciation of Saul.
3. An Appreciation of Jonathan.
4. An Appreciation of Amos.
5. The Beauty of the Book of Ruth.
6. The Lessons of the Book of Jonah.

For Intermediates and Seniors

1. The Story of a Tricky Man.
2. Four Representative Women.
3. The Story of a Jealous Man.
4. A Great Friendship.
5. The Story of a Temple Chest.
6. The Lesson of the Story of Jonah.

QUESTIONS TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

For Intermediates and Seniors

1. What did Zacharias say his boy should become? 2. How do we distinguish John the son of Zacharias from other Johns of the Bible? 3. What did John owe to his home? 4. What Old Testament child was dedicated from infancy to the service of the Lord? 5. How did Jesus as a boy make his home happy? 6. What do you owe to your home? 7. What is your greatest contribution to your home?

For Young People and Adults

1. What was the world power at the close of the Old Testament history? 2. What was the world power at the beginning of the New Testament history? 3. What did Zacharias expect the Messiah to do for his nation? 4. What did he expect his son to become? 5. What manner of man did that child grow to be? 6. What was Jesus' teaching regarding the home? 7. Are you a "view-with-alarmist" in regard to the American home? What dangers is the American home facing? 8. What should a Christian home be?

Mary and Elisabeth — *Albertinelli*

FOURTH QUARTER

REPRESENTATIVE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

(Second Half of a Six-Months' Course)

Lesson I—October 5

ZACHARIAS AND ELISABETH (Life in a Pious Jewish Home)

GOLDEN TEXT: And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. Luke 1.6

LESSON Luke 1.5-80 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 122

LUKE 1.5 There was in the days of Herod, king of Judæa, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abijah: and he had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. 6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

57 Now Elsiabeth's time was fulfilled that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. 58 And her neighbors and her kinsfolk heard that the Lord had magnified his mercy towards her; and they rejoiced with her. 59 And it came to pass on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. 60 And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John. 61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. 62 And they made signs to his father, what he would have him called. 63 And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all. 64 And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue *loosed*, and he spake, blessing God. 65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judæa. 66 And all that heard them laid them up in their heart, saying, What then shall this child be? For the hand of the Lord was with him.

76 Yea and thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High:
For thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to make ready his ways;
77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people
In the remission of their sins,
78 Because of the tender mercy of our God,
Whereby the dayspring from on high shall visit us,
79 To shine upon them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death;
To guide our feet into the way of peace.

80 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. A RIGHTEOUS COUPLE, verses 5, 6. In the days of Herod, king of Judæa (Herod the Great, who reigned from 37 to 4 B.C.) there lived a priest named Zacharias, of the course, or group, of Abijah. "David divided the priests into twenty-four courses, each of which in rotation was responsible for the temple services for a week. Each course, therefore, officiated twice a year, at an interval of six months. After the captivity only four courses returned, but these were subdivided into twenty-four courses under the old manner. The course of Abijah is said to have officiated in April and October." The wife of Zacharias, who was a descendant of Aaron, was called Elisabeth. Their home was in the hill country south of Jerusalem. Both were righteous before God, strict Jews who observed the Mosaic law, kept all the commandments and ordinances. They were not faultless, but blameless according to the Old Testament standards.

II. PREDICTION OF THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST, verses 8-25.

III. PREDICTION OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS, verses 26-38.

IV. VISIT OF MARY TO ELISABETH; THE MAGNIFICAT, verses 39-56.

V. THE BIRTH AND NAMING OF JOHN, verses 57-66. When Elisabeth's son was born, all her neighbors and relations rejoiced with her. "There is nothing else in the world so important as children, nothing else so interesting" (David Starr Jordan). Those present at the circumcision of the child when he was eight days old, wished to name him Zacharias after his father, but Elisabeth said, "Not so; but he shall be called John." See verse 13. *John* means *the grace of God.* "There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name," they said in astonishment, and turning to the father, they asked him what the name should be, making use of signs, for he seems to be supposed deaf as well as dumb. (Verses 18-20. "Five words cost Zacharias forty weeks' silence," Thomas Fuller.) "Various suggestions have been made to evade the conclusion that he was deaf: that men are very apt to treat a dumb person as if he were also deaf; that they communicated by signs instead of by speech to spare the feelings of Elisabeth, whose judgment was being appealed from; that a sign was all that was needed, Zacharias having heard all that was said" (Expositor's Greek Testament). Zacharias called for a writing tablet, a tablet covered with wax, and upon it he wrote with a stylus, "His name is John."

Then Zacharias burst forth into speech, blessing God. The people were much impressed by his recovery of speech and by the unexpected name given the babe, and they perceived that some great future was before the child. "What, in view of these things, shall this child be?" they asked. "For the hand of the Lord was with him," the Evangelist comments.

"From the homes of such priests who can pray, and of such hearts which can trust, there ever have been coming the great prophets of the Lord" (C. R. Erdman).

VI. THE BENEDICTUS, verses 67-80. The song of Zacharias is called "The Benedictus," from the first word in the Latin translation, which means "Blessed." The song is second only to Mary's song, the Magnificat. In verses 68-75 Zacharias praises God for having fulfilled his promise made through the prophets of old and having wrought redemption for his people by raising up the Messiah ("the power of the Messianic king is likened to the strength of a bull which is represented by his horns") of the house of David to save them from their enemies, to show mercy to their fathers, and in remembrance of his holy covenant, the oath made with Abraham their father, to allow them to live in peace and righteousness.

In verses 76-79, Zacharias turns to his babe and directly addresses him as the forerunner of the Messiah and the preacher of salvation, salvation which consists in the remission of sins.

A covenant of Christian parenthood which one of our denominations is promoting is this: "Recognizing that our lives and all that we have are given us from God in trust to be related in the biggest sense to his heavenly kingdom in the world, we desire in this special manner to acknowledge the stewardship of our parenthood and, as a constant evidence of the same, freely to dedicate our children to the service of God in any definite form his will may direct and whenever it may be made clear. We will endeavor by

training and counsel to give them open minds and hearts, so that the call of God and his plan for their lives may be unhindered."

Because of God's tender mercy, the dayspring from on high shall visit us, Zacharias foresees. "The Greek word translated 'dayspring' is ambiguous. It may mean the rising of a heavenly body and hence the heavenly body itself, so that the Messiah is virtually called 'the son,' or 'Star of Israel,' or it may mean 'the Branch,' a title applied to the Messiah" (Dummelow). Very beautiful are the closing words of the song: to shine upon them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death; to guide our feet into the way of peace (with God).

"Zacharias conceives of the men of Israel, if not of men in general, as a vast caravan, which has strayed from the true path, the way of life and peace, and has lost itself amidst the shifting and barren sands of the wilderness. The night falls on them, and they huddle together in the darkness, which seems the very shadow of impending death. But in the divine mercy a new and unexpected light dawns upon them from on high; and as it spreads they take courage, and gather themselves up for a new effort; they find and return to the path, and their souls are filled with peace. In the beautiful figure of the 'dayspring from on high,' Zacharias sets before us the happy effects of the remission of our sins, of that true salvation wrought by Christ. The shadows which obscured heaven and earth flee away, the path of life becomes plain; and returning to that path, we walk henceforth in the light, and become children of the day. All Christ's visitation and enlightenment are meant to lead us into the path where we shall find peace with God, and therefore with ourselves and all mankind. We are at rest only when all our relations with God and the outer world are right and our inner being is at harmony with itself" (Samuel Cox).

"Pyramid of Zacharias"
Valley of Jehoshaphat, Jerusalem

VII. THE GROWTH OF JOHN, verse 80. John grew spiritually as well as mentally. His abode was in the desert until he came forth as the messenger of Jesus. "What went ye out into the wilderness to behold? a reed shaken with the wind?" Jesus asked the multitudes one day. "But what went ye out to see? a man clothed in soft raiment? But what went ye out to see? a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written,

Behold, I send my messenger before thy face,
Who shall prepare thy way before thee.

I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there is none greater than John: yet he that is but little in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

"Very early," said Margaret Fuller, "I perceived that the object of life is to grow," and it has been said of her that she herself was a remarkable instance of the power of the human being to go forward and upward.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

They came to circumcise the child, verse 59. At the circumcision of a child the circumciser said, "Blessed be the Lord our God, who hath sanctified us by his precepts and hath given us the law of circumcision." The father replied, "Who

hath sanctified us by his precepts and hath commanded us to enter the child into the covenant of Abraham our father."—One Volume Commentary.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In his interpretation of the Gospel of Luke, Dr. Charles R. Erdman writes: "Luke is the Gospel of gladness, of praise, and of prayer, of tender, human interest, and of heavenly grace. It is fitting, therefore, that the narrative should open with a scene in the temple at the hour of incense and with a divine promise which fills a heart with rapturous joy. This promise concerns the birth of one who is to prepare the way for the ministry of Christ, and this ministry forms the sum and substance of the Gospel story."

With all his contemporaries, Zacharias felt bitterly the subjection of his country to the Roman power, and his mind dwelt upon such prophecies as Psalm 70 and interpreted them as forecasting the deliverance from the Romans. He believed that a great hour was dawning for Israel, that a Deliverer of the nation was about to be sent from God.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Here are some questions which are pertinent in connection with our theme:

"How much do you know about the homes of your pupils? How much do you know about their home life? How often have you ever called upon or visited them in their homes? Have you ever individually or personally talked with them about their home life? In how far have you used your influence to make their homes Christian homes? Are you improving the opportunities which come to you to give them higher and truer ideals of what the home life should be? Have you made your home a means for helping other homes? Have you ever invited your pupils individually to visit you in your own home, to take a meal or pass an evening? Let me press the question closer still. Is your home the kind of home which has a warm, loving, generous, helpful, Christian atmosphere? Can every one who enters it feel it?"

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

WHAT MAKES A CHRISTIAN?

Beginning the Lesson

A recent French book, The Glorious Misery of the Priests, has a chapter which tells how the priests came back from the war to find their parishes desolate and buildings in ruins. In one place the people gathered around the priest as he baptized a little child, and then came a convoy bringing provisions. "A priest, and bread! Things are moving!" an old woman exclaimed, and this incident has given the author his chapter heading, "A Priest, and Bread." It might be our topic today—a priest, Zacharias; a child to be baptized, John the Baptist; and bread—the Bread of Life of whom the old priest sang.

The coming of a son to the home of the aged priest Zacharias and his wife Elisabeth was a great joy. For a Hebrew couple to be childless was accounted the greatest of misfortunes, a mark, indeed, of God's displeasure. And to this pious couple the gift of a son to train in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord was the greatest blessing that could come to them. (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

Jesus' Teachings Regarding the Family

Through all the centuries the chief glory of Judaism has been its family life. Israel's entire social structure was built upon this institution as its chief cornerstone. Jesus recognized that if this was imperfect or insecure, no stable social order could be established.

Jesus' own experience in his home at Nazareth had also revealed to him the social potentialities of a home in which the spirit of fraternity and loyalty prevailed. He paid the highest possible tribute to his own home life, for he expanded the idea of the family into his comprehensive social ideal of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus asserted that marriage is necessary to meet the innate social needs of man, and that its obligations are supreme. His hearty approval of marriage is shown by the zeal with which he attacked the current tendency to make divorce easy.

With all his might he set himself against anything which threatened the integrity of the family.

Jesus evidently accepted the Old Testament teachings regarding the duties of children to parents. If the accepted chronology be correct, he himself devoted fully thirty years of his brief life to the faithful discharge of his filial obligations. With hot indignation he denounced the Pharisees who encouraged the people to bring gifts when they were really needed by those who had the first claim upon them (Mark 7.6-12).—Professor Charles Foster Kent, in The Social Teachings of the Prophets and Jesus.

Paul's Teaching Regarding Parents and Children

Paul reiterated the old command: Children, obey your parents at every point, for this is right for those who belong to the Lord: but with keen insight born of wide observation, he added: Fathers, do not irritate your children, lest you make them sullen.

In the parallel passage in Ephesians 6.40 he again enjoins parents to "bring up their children in the discipline and admonition of the Lord." Thus Paul not only reiterated a fundamental tenet of Judaism, but also the principle underlying the modern religious education movement. Upon parents he laid the chief responsibility for the moral and religious education of their children. At the same time he enjoined them to use that superlative tact which is required in this most important of parental duties if it is to be successfully performed.—Professor Charles Foster Kent, in The Social Teachings of the Prophets and Jesus.

The Right Kind of Home

The great, overshadowing peril of a boy's life is not, as many suppose, his bad companions nor his bad books nor his bad habits; it is the peril of homelessness. Homelessness is not merely houselessness—the having no bed or room which can be called one's own. It is the isolation of the boy's soul; the lack of some one to listen to him; a life without roots which hold him in his place and make him grow. This is what drives the boy into the arms of evil, and makes the street his home and the gang his family; or else drives him in upon himself with uncommunicated imaginings and feverish desires.

An increasing risk which many prosperous families encounter is the tendency to homelessness, the temptations of the nomadic life, as though a home were a tent which one might fold "like the Arabs, and as silently steal away"; the slackening of domestic responsibility through the habit of transient residence in boarding-houses or hotels as refuges from the cares of a home.

Rich parents may be so completely preoccupied with money-making or money-spending, that their home becomes little more than a sleeping-place; and poor parents may, though with better reason, be separated from their children from early morning till late evening by the necessities of bread-winning at the factory or shop. In either case of homelessness, therefore, there is the same necessity for finding some substitute for a home. For the homeless children of the poor, philanthropy has devised a Placing-out System, which deports boys from the homelessness of a city to domestic life in rural communities. For the homeless children of the rich a similar Placing-out System has been provided by the establishment of boarding schools, where devoted and intelligent teachers accept the parental responsibilities which over-burdened or self-indulgent parents decline.

What kind of American home is likely to make the right kind of American boy? There are, it would seem, three characteristics which a boy must recognize before he will think of his home as good, and which, if he does recognize them as marks of his own home, will make him remember that home as the most precious of his moral inheritances.

A simple home, that is to say, is simply a home; not a step to something else, not an instrument of social ambition, not a mere sleeping-place, like a kennel into which a dog creeps for the night; but a center of affectionate self-denial and mutual forbearance; an end in itself, as though the main concern for a family were simply to make a home and to keep it simple. When a boy discovers that his parents find their satisfaction elsewhere than in the home,—in the club of the prosperous or in the saloon of the poor,—then the boy also will follow the group-instinct as it leads him to the street or the gang; in so far as he sees the home satisfying his parents, it is likely to satisfy him.

The second mark of a good home is consistency. The parental discipline of the home is to be chiefly maintained, not by precepts, but by the consistent conduct of the parents themselves. A boy is not easily moved by exhortation, but he is affected with extraordinary ease by contagion. A boy is in many points immature and unobservant, but one trait in him is highly developed,—the capacity to detect anything that looks like humbug. If he observe any considerable inconsistency between precept and example, between exhortation and character, all the well-intended efforts of his home are likely to be in vain.

Out of the simplicity and consistency of a good home issues its third characteristic. It is that relation between children and their parents whose historical name is Piety. Piety, in its Latin usage, was the name for the duty and loyalty of a child to its parents, or of a wife to her husband. Æneas, in Virgil, was called pious because he was a good son of Anchises. Piety toward God is, therefore, nothing else than the affection of a son translated into a religious experience.

This, then, is the American home which makes the right kind of American boy,—a home where simplicity and consistency open into piety; where a boy thinks of his father not as a drill-master or fault-finder, so that the first instinct of the boy is to keep out of the way; nor of his mother as yielding a fragment of her day to her children, while committing their nurture for the most part to hired experts; but of both parents as comrades to whom it is a happiness to go, and as advisers from whom it is safe to learn.—Condensed from Religious Education of an American Citizen, by Francis Greenwood Peabody.

The Failure of Marriage

We make bold to state that marriage is never a failure; it is, if anything is, a divine institution; it is made to fit into the highest and holiest needs of our human situation; but some of the people who take on marriage are failures, and it is from that fact that all the trouble comes. There is no such institution or scheme of things that could be made to work out satisfactorily in the case of utterly selfish, hopelessly stupid, or wilfully perverse people, and in varying degrees these are the people who so often illustrate the so-called failure of marriage.

A successful marriage, in the finest sense of the term, must always be a great achievement, and such a great achievement is not worked out by people who refuse to take into their daily scheme of things such virtues as patience and consideration and at least a few high and holy idealisms. If without any of these the adventure of marriage is found to be a failure, is there any point in laying the blame on the institution?

The marriage ceremony of our Church advises that marriage be taken in hand reverently, discreetly, advisedly and in the fear of God. If that were done always, a good start would be made toward a happy and really successful marriage. But it would only be a start; the whole great undertaking would still be to be carried through: an undertaking, say what we will, that makes a real demand upon fine qualities of mind and heart and temper. These are the facts in the situation that we must get fixed in our minds, and that we must try to play up to in relation to this most vital matter. And those people who refuse to recognize these facts, who refuse to take marriage seriously and refuse to pay any of the price that must be paid for its success, need not think that they should be allowed to break down an institution that all the rest of the community have found to be necessary to the highest human happiness and development.—The New Outlook.

Dedicating an American Home

"If the American home is to survive as an institution of love and religion, it will have to be more than a rendezvous for week-end roysterers, a retreat for rowdyism under the cloak of 'Good fellowship,'" are the forceful words of a Boston University Professor. "Homes should be dedicated just as churches are," he further adds. "For the home is the foundation of life and government. In it lies the power that can eliminate the evils of divorce and unhappy marriages. With all my heart I believe that a general adoption of consecrating homes—not with the hilarity of the general housewarming, but in seriousness and spirituality—would help greatly to reduce the number of divorces and miserable lives."

The Youth's Companion describes the dedication of a home at Melrose, Massachusetts. It was a neighborhood affair. The head of the family reasoned that, as we dedicate churches to the use of the widely-scattered worshipers whom they

serve, and schoolhouses to the service of the whole public that builds and owns them, so we may fittingly dedicate a home, which is the cornerstone both of the church and of the school, to the special service of the neighborhood in which it stands, and with which it will hold most of its relations.

There are two little daughters in the family. In other homes near by live their playmates. All the children, with their parents, were invited to be present and have a part in the exercises.

When the guests had assembled, the father of the family spoke simply and briefly of his reasons for inviting them. He felt that a home plays as important a part in the life of a community as a church or a school, perhaps a more important part; that it is therefore fitting to dedicate it to the highest service of the family and their neighbors and friends; and that it is well for children to learn that home means something more than food and shelter. The pastor of the church that the family attends read some verses written for the occasion and two short selected poems that expressed the spirit of it. Then the mother lighted a torch and passed it to one of the little daughters, who handed it on to her sister. She in turn gave it to her father, and he applied it to the waiting but as yet unlighted wood in the new fireplace. As the wood kindled and the cheerful blaze mounted, ten or twelve children formed a semicircle round the fire and sang a little song of thanksgiving for the home to a kindergarten air that they had learned in school. After that there were food and drink and a social hour.

We are living in a period when the centripetal forces that hold the home together are under severe strain; when such powerful influences as the automobile, moving pictures, athletics and the widened interests of women are exerting a strong disruptive force. Anything which, like the simple and natural service here described, may serve to sanctify and preserve the old traditions of family responsibility and neighborly friendship is to be welcomed and imitated.

Who, of those children that took part, is likely ever to forget, or when he or she sets up a new home will fail to recall, something of the sacred significance of that gathering?

The Importance of the Early Years in the Home

The Bureau of Prisons in my division handles five great penal institutions. From these and other penitentiaries and jails of the country almost half a million ex-convicts go forth to re-enter society each year. I have talked with thousands of such so-called lawless men and women, their attorneys, parents, and friends. By no means are they all hardened, nor do they come from criminal stock; nor, for that matter, do they very much differ in the fundamental raw material of character from you and me. Only it seems that the "behavior patterns" of their lives have had these raw materials so combined as to leave thin spots where *self-control, unselfishness, truth* or *obedience* should have been woven in. A startling number were, in infancy, spoiled children; and one confession of early impressions comes too commonly among prisoners to be disregarded—that of contrasts or extremes between indulgence and petting alternated with seemingly unreasonable denials. Others claim in their earliest memories a cameo-like impression of some incident where the apparent trickery or fraud of an adult member of the family succeeded, or where deceit on the part of the child was rewarded or went at least undiscovered. I have become convinced that control of the spread of crime can best be secured by vigilance over first-laid impressions of authority, law, truth, self-denial, and ambition.—Mabel Walker Willebrandt.

The Mother and the Home

The mother is the one supreme asset of national life; she is more important by far than the successful statesman or business man or artist or scientist. If the mother does not do her duty, there will be no next generation, or a generation that is worse than none at all. In other words, we cannot as a nation get along if we haven't the right kind of home life.—Theodore Roosevelt.

"The men of earth build houses—halls and chambers, roofs and domes—
But the women of the earth—God knows—the women build the homes."

The Father and the Home

To make a happy fireside clime
To weans and wife,
That's the true pathos and sublime
Of human life.—Burns.

What to Bring to the Home

Bring tolerance that can kiss and disagree,
Bring virtue, honor, truth and loyalty;
Bring faith that sees with undissembling eyes,
Bring all large loves and heavenly charities.—Sidney Lanier.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Is Dean Inge right when he prophesies that "the whole face of the country will soon be spotted with bungaloid growths, within which childless couples will sleep after racing about the roads in their motor cars"?

2. If around the nation's fireside respect for authority, reverence for holy things, and obedience to parental discipline are taught, the surest foundation for peace will be laid.—Calvin Coolidge.

3. Civilization and character are murdered in the tenements for the lack of homes.—Jacob Riis.

4. Every divorce, for whatever cause, means a broken home.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What did Jesus mean by his words to his mother at Cana? 2. What did her words to the servants indicate? 3. Contrast Mary's belief in her Son at Cana, and her disbelief in him as recorded in Mark 3.20-35. 4. Why was Jesus' provision for his mother's last days wise for both Mary and John? 5. What can you say about a mother's influence? What attributes of all true mothers do we see in Mary?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WHAT I OWE TO MY HOME

Beginning the Lesson

There was no other ancient civilization in which the family held so important a place as it did among the Hebrews, and a fine Hebrew scholar has said that the most outstanding contribution which the Jewish race has made to the welfare of the world is the "hallowing of the home." It was a hallowed home into which John the Baptist was born, for his parents were a God-fearing priest named Zacharias and his equally pious wife Elisabeth. What does Luke say about them in the words chosen for our Golden Text?

The Beginning of Our Lesson Story

In the days of Herod the King, it seemed to many in Israel as if the night that hung over their race would never break. The soldiers of Rome garrisoned the Holy City and flaunted their rule even in the precincts of the sacred temple! A foreign king of a despised race ruled over them, himself the vassal of Rome. Every vineyard, olive, grove and field, yes, every herd and flock, had to yield tax to Rome! More hateful still, rumors were abroad that Cæsar Augustus, the mighty Emperor in far-off Rome, was planning to make a census of Israel, counting every man, woman, and child, as though they belonged to him! Yet was not Israel, in truth, the chosen people of God? Was it not true that they alone of all the nations kept his holy Law and observed the Feasts ordained in the sacred Books? Truly, it was night in Israel!

But day must break! Messiah, promised by the prophets, would surely appear and deliver his people!

"Behold I send my messenger before my face, and he shall prepare the way before me" (Mal. 3.1).

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before that great . . . day of the Lord come" (Mal. 4.5).

These were the words of the last great prophet of Israel. And now, in the days of Herod there were many in Israel who prayed daily for the coming of Messiah and looked for him who should be the herald of the new day.

Among these were Zacharias the priest and Elisabeth his wife. "They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments of the Lord, blameless," we are told. Yet in their lives there was a great sorrow. Year after year they had prayed that God would grant them a son to be the strength of their old age, and to take his part in the Kingdom of the Messiah. But now they had both grown old,

and there was no son growing up to be a priest in his father's place. And when they died there would be none to keep the name of Zacharias alive in Israel.

Twice in the year Zacharias must leave his home among the hills of Judea and go to Jerusalem to perform his week of service in the temple. Very solemn and important were the duties of a priest, with rules that must be exactly fulfilled. But there was one duty to which a man might look forward for years, and which might only be his for once in his whole life—the duty of burning incense before the Lord in the Holy Place.

Once more, as in many a past year, Zacharias stood at dawn in the temple among the throng of priests appointed for that day's service, and watched breathlessly while a lad put his hand in the bag and drew out the stone of the lot. "The course of Abia!"—that was his course! Again the lot was cast, and Zacharias found himself chosen for the holy service of the incense. At the appointed hour, clad in spotless robes, and bearing in his hand the golden censer full of incense (incense compounded of rare and costly spices in a manner entirely sacred to the temple)—Zacharias passed before the watching throng of worshipers into the Holy House. As soon as the great doors closed, the people prostrated themselves before God, each man praying silently or aloud, some repeating the temple prayers, some bringing their secret burdens to the Lord. As they prayed, each thought of the scene within where Zacharias alone would pour incense on the fire that burned on the golden altar so that the heavy-scented smoke would rise in wreaths and fill the house with its perfume. That rising smoke was the symbol of the people's prayers.

It seemed long that day before the heavy doors reopened, yet no man would rise from his knees till the priest should reappear to bless the congregation. At last the old man came forth. But the people waited in vain for the words of benediction. One by one they raised their wondering faces and saw Zacharias standing with a strange, rapt look, as of one who has seen that which no man may tell. He made them understand that some great thing had come to him in the temple, and that his lips were sealed from speaking it. And truly it was a great thing (verses 11-20). —Emily Huntley, in the Sunday School Chronicle and Times.

Zacharias returned to his home with that strange silence closing his lips, but when his son was born he burst forth into a beautiful song of joy and prophecy. Who will tell us about it?

What One Owes to his Home

What sort of man did the son of Zacharias grow to be? Why was he called the forerunner of Jesus? What did Zacharias say he was to be, verses 76 and 77? What did Jesus say about him? What did John owe to his home? Do you not think that a pious father and mother like Zacharias and Elisabeth must have trained the boy John to keep the commandments even as they did? Must not the boy have often heard his father talk about the coming of "the dayspring from on high," the Messiah who would guide their feet into the way of peace? If we knew the whole story, we should find that John would never have become John the Baptist, the herald of the Christ, had it not been for his home influences.

"Let us learn to think of our homes very reverently as the temples of the God who hath here builded us together into families; and let us be careful to do nothing that would destroy or defile this temple. Any unkind or cruel word—bad enough anywhere—spoken at home becomes a kind of blasphemy, breaking down the walls of the temple of God. May each of our homes be a place where the peace of God is never broken; where the daily prayer to God never ceases; where the ancient benediction, 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,' rests upon all as an abiding fact."

What Should Be your Attitude in your Home?

A great deal has been said about finding out how religious a man is by seeing how he behaves toward his family. What about seeing in the same way how good a Christian a boy or girl is? Can you tell what kind of child one is by how he behaves toward his parents? It may be that a person is very good at home and very selfish and mean away from home, may it not? And what of those who, through fear of their parents, seem very obedient at home? How are they likely to act when not under parental control? The important thing is that the real Christian is a true Christian everywhere—at home as well as away from home. The boy or girl who is trying to follow the Master is certain to think how he may show his loyalty to Jesus at home. Does this mean that he will try to be patient and helpful toward those who are younger and less strong than he? Can

you think of an illustration of this—something you have seen? The Jewish children of old were taught to obey their parents. Does this apply to Christian boys and girls? Why should children be expected to show respect and obedience in the home? Has the greater experience of the parents anything to do with it? Have their undoubted interest and love for their children any bearing on the matter?

Every group that lives and works together must have some organization, else the group soon breaks up. Even a football team cannot survive without officers and some authority. How long could a home exist if every one were left to do as he pleased, regardless of the common good? Is it right that authority should be located in those oldest, wisest, and most capable of using their authority aright? But obedience and kindness to those younger and less strong are not the only ways of showing one's Christianity at home. Has the child any right to expect food and shelter and clothing and a good education, and return nothing for these things? What can he return? Has the home a right to expect him to do something for its maintenance? What about the little chores that each boy is asked to do? What about setting the table, arranging the flowers, caring for one's own room? How far should each be held responsible for his own part in the work? Can a person be a true Christian and refuse to contribute his part to the life of the home?

But the material help given is not all the story. Sometimes the greatest and the best things of life are not material things at all. What else has a mother or a father to expect from his child besides help? What about love? Now, one cannot demand love but one has sometimes a right to expect love in return for one's own love. Have parents a right to expect their children to love them? Why? How far ought a child to show that affection to his parents? Does the way in which we show our love to father and to mother change as the years pass? Are words necessary? Are they desirable? Sometimes our fathers and our mothers will be taken from us by death. How would a boy or girl feel to look back and have to say: "Yes, I always loved my parents but I do not know whether they ever really understood it. I never told them. I sort of took it for granted. I wish I had it to do over again: I would not let a day pass without letting them know that I did love them." How would you feel if that boy or girl were you?

The chief joy of parents' hearts is to see their children growing up into Christian men and women. That is the chief reward they get for all their labor, sacrifice, and patience. Another way, then, of showing our really fine Christian spirit in our homes is to grow up into the sort of men and women that our parents wish us to become. Read Little Women and see how a whole family worked together, keeping the Christian spirit in their lives, because each was eager to make the other happy and contented, and especially, each was eager to make mother's life as happy and as comfortable as was possible.

What, then, is a Christian home? It is a home in which the Spirit of Christ is supreme. Now, it is easy to say that; but how can his Spirit be found in the home? What are the signs of its presence? First, each will strive to do his part to make the home as Christlike as possible. Are finding one's own work and doing it regularly and well a part of this? Is keeping up one's own devotional life, through prayer and Bible study, a part? Why are these necessary if a home is to be Christlike? A truly Christian family will not let its fine Christian spirit stop at the doorway; it will be anxious to lend a hand in community enterprises and to make its own home life felt by others who need it. Can you think of any home that seems peculiarly Christian? How have the members of this home made the influence of their home life felt in the community? Has a real Christian a right to stop trying till his home becomes what he believes his own life ought to be?—Condensed from an Article in the Sunday School Journal, by Hugh H. Harris.

Sentence Sermons

Home is a place where all should be pleasant.

"If you are a child of God, your life in the home should reveal it."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Is the account of the visit of the shepherds to the manger given in another Gospel besides Luke? 2. Where are Nazareth, Bethlehem, Cana? 3. To what does the "third day," John 2.1 refer? 4. Why did Mary tell Jesus about the failure of the supply of wine? 5. What are the first words which Jesus spoke to his mother which the Bible records? 6. How do they explain, in a way, his words to her in John 2.4? 7. When dying, how did Jesus look out for his mother?

MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS (An Example of Motherhood)

GOLDEN TEXT: Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart. Luke 2.19

LESSON Luke 2.15-19; John 2. 1-5; 19.25-27

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 67

LUKE 2.15 And it came to pass, when the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. 16 And they came with haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. 17 And when they saw it, they made known concerning the saying which was spoken to them about this child. 18 And all that heard it wondered at the things which were spoken unto them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart.

JOHN 2.1 And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: 2 and Jesus also was bidden, and his disciples, to the marriage. 3 And when the wine failed, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. 4 And Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. 5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

19.25 These things therefore the soldiers did. But there were standing by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold, thy son! 27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold, thy mother! And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own *home*.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE MOTHER OF THE BABE, Luke 2.15-19. The shepherds were amazed at the message which had come to them, but they were not incredulous, and they said, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing that is come to pass which the Lord hath made known unto us." Read the whole beautiful story in Luke 2. They went and found the Christ-child in the manger, and his mother Mary, and also Joseph. To Mary and Joseph the shepherds told what they had heard and all marveled, but Mary retained their words in her heart, pondering them over and over.

"His mother kept all these things in her heart. The heart of every mother becomes a marvelous record in itself. It holds many a page of significant event which never finds its way into print. If any mother should see fit to declare all that she has seen, heard, and felt, touching some unfolding life, in all the sense of awe and promise and mystery which that life induced, it would make the finest chapter of Macaulay's England or Gibbon's Decline and Fall seem dull reading. His mother kept all these things in her heart. They were too sacred, too vital, too wonderful for outward expression" (Charles R. Brown).

II. THE MOTHER OF THE MAN, John 2.1-5. The third day after Jesus' talk with Nathanael, John 1.47-51, he came to Cana in Galilee, Nathanael's home town. At a house where Mary was well known, wedding festivities were being held, and when her Son appeared with his followers they were invited to attend. Toward the end of the festivities, which lasted several days, the supply of wine began to give out. Mary saw this, and turned to Jesus for help, "They have no wine," she told him. She made no request; she simply told him of the situation.

"Woman, what have I to do with thee?" Jesus returned. There is no harshness here, for the Greek word *gunai,* woman, is a term of respect. "In the Greek tragedies it is constantly used in addressing queens and persons of distinction. Augustus addresses Cleopatra as *Gunai.* But while there is neither harshness nor disrespect, there is distance in the expression" (Marcus Dods). "What have I to do with thee?" is, however, a rebuke. His public ministry had begun; his mother must not expect to control his actions.

"She must be taught that the old days of 'subjection' were over; that he had now to realize the wider aims and deeper purposes of his own divine mission; that his acts were now to be controlled by its supreme necessities. One

Raphael

THE SISTINE MADONNA

practical thought for ourselves we may gather from this rebuke. It is one of the marks of a wise parent to discern betimes the period when the child's life must pass beyond the parents' immediate control. The hand of loving care which has guided the child's younger life may, if it linger on him too long and too fondly, thwart and hinder his own development. The father insists on keeping his boy within the lines of some career which he has designed for him, and resents the boy's desire to wander outside of them. The mother expects the growing daughter to share her own ideas and conform to her own customs, and is distressed at the signs of independence. So the living hand of help and guidance becomes the dead hand of mere restraint. The bonds of love become irksome chains" (Cosmo Gordon Lang).

"Mine hour has not yet come," my appointed time for exerting my miraculous power, Jesus added. "The quiet consciousness of power which breathes in that expression had marked his whole life. He could bide his time. He had the strength to wait" (F. W. Robertson).

Evidently Mary found hope in the "not yet," for she turned to the servants and said, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." "She did not comprehend her Son's strange repulse and mysterious words; but she knew that they were not capricious words; she knew that the law which ruled his will was right, and that importunity was useless" (F. W. Robertson).

"This is a safe rule for life, this is the straight road to greatness and nobility. Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. Do it, even though it is hard! Do not attempt to evade any of Christ's commands. Do not begin to argue about them. To obey is our business. And remember obedience is the proof of discipleship" (J. D. Jones).

III. THE MOTHER OF THE SAVIOR, John 19.25-27. Standing by the cross of Christ were his mother, her sister Salome, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. (The two phrases, "his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas," may be taken to refer to one woman, but in that case the two sisters were both called Mary, which is improbable.)

"O the weight of her affliction!
Hers, who won God's benediction,
Hers, who bore God's Holy One:
O that speechless, ceaseless yearning!
O those dim eyes never turning
From her wondrous, suffering Son!"

"If I were hanged on the highest hill
I know whose love would follow me still,
Mother o' mine" (Kipling).

Jesus looked upon his mother and John ("the disciple whom he loved"—John never mentions his own name in his Gospel), and said to his mother, "Woman, behold, thy son!" and to John he said, "Behold, thy mother." Dr. F. B. Meyer suggests that Jesus would not call her "mother" lest identification with himself might expose her to insult.

"In the hour of excruciating agony he did not forget his mother's need. No other person's sorrow was eclipsed by his own. He was never self-centered in his grief, so as to ignore the weakness of others" (J. H. Jowett).

And from that hour John took the mother of Jesus into his own home.

"The sorrowing mother, the sorrowing disciple, are helped by being given something to do. They are to find comfort for themselves by comforting each other. That is the message from the cross to all who are in trouble. To sit down and think about it is fatal. In that direction is no comfort. The thing to do is to seek opportunities of ministry" (George Hodges).

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Bethlehem of Judea is five miles southwest of Jerusalem. The Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem is built over the traditional site of the manger in which the Infant Jesus was laid.

Cana was called Cana of Galilee to distinguish it from Cana in another province. The generally accepted site is the village now called Kefr Kenna, about five miles northeast of Nazareth on the road to the Sea of Galilee.

Golgotha, the place of the crucifixion, was without the walls of Jerusalem. The traditional site is included in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. The site accepted by many scholars is "Gordon's Calvary," a hill outside the Damascus gate.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

A MOTHER'S INFLUENCE

Beginning the Lesson

Henry Ward Beecher had some thirty or forty fine engravings of madonnas in his home—Spanish, Italian, Flemish, French. In speaking of them he said: "My servants, who are most of them Catholics, I presume think if I am not a Catholic I am pretty near one. I look upon these pictures as representations of the divine Mother, and so do they; but they think of Mother according to the teachings of their church, and I think of mother according to the universal instincts of humanity."

Mary, the mother of Jesus, "blessed among women," was not the first to glorify motherhood, and the home in Nazareth was not the first, nor last, in which a mother has helped a son to advance in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. "The Old Testament and secular history alike abound in examples of noble motherhood. But what we claim for Christianity is that it has carried the 'mothering instinct' into society and is striving to secure for everybody's children those best gifts which a loving mother would covet for her own offspring. The protection of the child's right to be well-born; the demand that in his tender years he shall not be dwarfed by being set to grind at labor's mill; the care for the sanitation of his home, and the provision of schools and teachers, all represent this 'mothering spirit' which is another outworking of the spirit of Christ that is seeping through all the crevices of the social fabric and coming to the surface everywhere."

The Character of Mary

Because of the mists of long and devout tradition which have obscured her character and made her very person almost mythical, we are surprised sometimes in reading the Gospels at the clearness and simplicity with which Mary the Mother of our Lord stands out before us there. She speaks only on three occasions, but when she speaks her words have such a directness and transparency about them, they come so true, they are so perfectly the words that an earnest and unselfish woman would have spoken, that they leave us the clearest and most satisfactory idea of what manner of woman she must have been. Those three utterances of hers are like three clear notes of a bell, that show how sound and rich its metal is. Think what they were. In the presence of the messenger who comes to tell her of the great privilege she bows her head and says, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it unto me according to thy word." When she finds her son in the temple she cries out to him, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." When she stands with him before the puzzled guests at Cana she turns to the servants and says, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." The young soul's consecration! The mother's overrunning love! The disciple's perfect loyalty! What can be clearer than the simple, true, brave, loving woman that those words reveal? How all the poor, tawdry mythology which has clustered about her, and called her the Queen of Heaven, disappears before the vastly deeper beauty of this true woman of the earth, who wins our confidence and love.—Phillips Brooks, in The Light of the World.

The Mother in Nazareth

I wonder if all mothers of small sons
Grow as perplexed as I have often grown?
Do they, through lack of wisdom, stand dismayed,
And falteringly face each day alone?

Could I have come some summer afternoon
And sat on the low doorstep at Mary's feet,
While Jesus and his younger brothers played
Upon the bright grass by the shady street,

I would have learned from her—oh, many things,
I think I would have grown so very wise
That I could answer truthfully at last
The thousand questions in these upturned eyes.—Grace Noll Crowell.

The Mother and John

Of what did they speak when the twilight
Purpled far o'er that Eastern sod,
When together they mused of the Master
And the pathways that once he trod—
John, the disciple beloved,
And Mary, the mother of God?

She would tell of the love-crowned manger,
And the shepherds who came at his birth;
Of the star-led Wise Men bringing
Their gifts of exceeding worth,
And in lowliest homage bending
To the King over all the earth.

Then the man's voice, deep and tender,
Would take up the loved refrain,
And tell of the Master he followed
Over mountain, and sea, and plain,
Till almost it seemed, in the doorway,
They should see his dear form again.

Oh, the days and nights of sorrow,
When the deepening shadow neared!
When Faith and Hope were shrouded
In the dusk of the grief they feared;
And dim through Calvary's darkness
They saw the cross upreared!

Rejoice! They have seen the dawning
Of that first grand Easter day;
From his lonely grave in the Garden
The stone has been rolled away;
They have heard his voice triumphant,
"Lo! I am yours for aye!"

Thus did they linger at even,
When the world was hushed to rest,
And speak of their Lord arisen—
She, of the earth most blest,
Who had held the Christ to her bosom,
And he who had leaned on his breast!—Lillian Ellis Charlton.

What the Mediæval World Learned from its Thought about the Mother of Jesus

The world is governed by its ideals, and seldom or never has there been one which has exercised a more profound and, on the whole, a more salutary influence than the mediæval conception of the Virgin. For the first time woman was elevated to her rightful position, and the sanctity of weakness was recognized as well as the sanctity of sorrow. No longer the slave or toy of man, no longer associated only with ideas of degradation and sensuality, woman rose, in the person of the Virgin Mother, into a new sphere, and became the object of a reverential homage of which antiquity had no conception. Love was idealized. The moral charm and beauty of female excellence were fully felt. A new type of character was called into being; a new kind of admiration was fostered. Into a harsh and ignorant and benighted age this ideal type infused a conception of gentleness and purity unknown to the proudest civilizations of the past. In the pages of living tenderness which many a monkish writer has left in honor of his celestial patron, in the millions who, in many lands and in many ages, have sought with no barren desire to mould their characters into her image, in the new sense of honor, in the chivalrous respect, in the softening of manners, in the refinement of tastes displayed in all

the walks of society: in these and in many other ways we detect its influence. All that was best in Europe clustered around it, and it is the origin of many of the purest elements of our civilization.—W. E. H. Lecky.

A Mother's Influence

"All that I am or hope to be," said Lincoln after he had become president, "I owe to my angel mother."

"A kiss from my mother made me a painter," said Benjamin West.

"My mother cast an influence over me which has lasted all my life," said Thomas Edison. "The good effects of her early training I can never lose. If it had not been for her appreciation and her faith in me at a critical time in my experience, I should likely never have become an inventor. I was always a careless boy, and with a mother of a different caliber I should probably have turned out badly. But her firmness, her sweetness, her goodness, were potent powers to keep me in the right path. My mother was the making of me. She was so true, so sure of me; and I felt that I had some one to live for, some one I must not disappoint."

John and the Mother of Jesus *Plockhorst*

John Bright, the famous English orator and statesman, when he was asked how he came to be such a master of the art of public speaking, replied, "The only help I ever had in that direction I got from listening to my mother read the Bible. She read the Bible aloud to us children, and I was so fascinated by her way of reading, her careful, unhurried, reverent and expressive way, that I have tried ever since to imitate it." By the power of his eloquence John Bright brought about great and beneficent changes in the laws of England.

In a letter to his mother on his fifty-eighth birthday, Thomas Carlyle, sharp-tongued man that he was, wrote thus lovingly and beautifully:

"Oh my dear mother, let it ever be a comfort to you, however weak you are, that you did your part honorably and well while in strength and were a noble mother to me and to us all. I am now myself grown old, and have had various things to do and suffer for so many years that there is nothing I ever had to be so much thankful for as the mother I had. That is a truth which I know well, and perhaps this day again it may be some comfort to you. Yes, surely, for if there has been any good in the things I have uttered in the world's hearing, it was your voice essentially that was speaking through me, essentially what you and my brave father meant and taught me to mean; this was the purport of all I spoke and wrote. And if in the few years that may remain to me I am to get any more written for the world, the essence of it, so far as it is worthy and good, will still be yours.

"May God reward you, dearest mother, for all you have done for me. I never can. Ah, no, but I will think of it with gratitude and pious love as long as I have the power of thinking, and I will pray God's blessing on you now and always."

A Mother's Rightful Prerogative

Children come to honor their mother in proportion as they come to respect her.

We hear much in these days of parents' retaining the confidence of their children by being "chummy" with them. This is a sound piece of counsel if it be not allowed to trespass on the right of other virtues. But many mothers have allowed it to disintegrate their rightful prerogative of authority. Such a mother did I see a few days ago. Her daughter, for whom she had done so much, had been revealing anything but a proper attitude with regard to the matter of obedience. And the mother uttered this surprising aphorism: "I don't care if my daughter disobeys me, so long as she loves me." And in that sentence we have the reason why so many daughters grow up in this day and generation "sophisticated" instead of spiritual. The friendship of a mother for her children should not be allowed to usurp the parent's prerogative of obedience.—Fred Smith.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The difference between the Protestant and the Roman view of Mary.

2. If any provideth not for his own, and especially his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.—Paul.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Why do we call Simeon's hymn *Nunc Dimittis?* 2. What is the meaning of Simeon's words in verse 34? 3. In verse 35? 4. Does wisdom depend on character? 5. Does spiritual insight depend on character? 6. Who are the pure in heart?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
WHAT WE OWE OUR MOTHERS

Beginning the Lesson

The Christmas story has been told in a few beautiful stanzas by J. G. Holland. You know them, do you not?

"There's a song in the air!
There's a star in the sky!
There's a mother's deep prayer
And a baby's low cry!
And the star rains its fire
While the beautiful sing,
For the manger of Bethlehem
Cradles a King."

You all know the two beautiful stories about the birth of the Christ child, the story of the Star and the Wise Men which Matthew tells, and of the Shepherds and the Angels as told by Luke. Let us think of Luke's story from the standpoint of the mother, rather than of the divine Babe. What does our Golden Text say? What were some of the things over which Mary pondered? In a stanza entitled Mary's Lullaby, Marion Coleman voices the mother's wonder and awe:

"Hush, my Baby, while I sing;
Angels whisper thou art King.
A baby king in a manger drear!
How shall the people find thee here?
Will *all* come—the rich, the great,
The poor, and people of low estate,
The old, the young, the simple, the wise,
Hailing thee Lord of earth and skies?
Hush, my Baby, while I sing;
Angels whisper that thou art King."

You recall that at the christening, as we may call it, of John the Baptist the people said, "What shall this child be?" and so Mary must have questioned, as she thought of the great promises and expectations in regard to her Babe. Mary, the Mother of Jesus, an Example of Motherhood, is the title of our lesson. Like her, every true mother thinks with trembling of the long way her baby must travel on the way to manhood or womanhood, but has rosy hopes that the child will become a blessing to her and to the world.

In our second paragraph, this time from the Gospel of John, the Babe of Bethlehem has become a grown Man and has entered upon his public ministry. How did Mary show her faith in him? In the days they had lived together in Nazareth she had found him always ready to help her in any trouble or emergency, and she

counted upon his help now. She simply told him an emergency had arisen, knowing it would be sufficient to bring it to his attention, without urging him to do anything about it. Jesus answered her somewhat strangely: what do his words mean? Perhaps his mother had not fully realized that he could not be with her constantly as of old, could not care for all her interests as formerly, because his great commission would claim all his time and thought, and therefore he sought to make her realize this. Yet on this occasion he could stop and do a kindness to his host. Mary knew he would, for she turned to the servants and said—what? "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it" is a good admonition for us to keep in mind. If we heeded it, we should constantly grow in grace and in favor with God and men as he had been doing all those thirty years of his life.

And now we come to that last sad scene when Jesus was on the cross. In all his suffering he remembered Mary his mother. What did he do for her?

A Debt That Can Never Be Paid in Full

There is one debt that you can never pay in full—your debt to your mother. She does not ask it or expect it. All she asks, all she hopes, is just that you pay the interest on it. And you cannot pay even that in money, but only in patience and love and gentleness—the one kind of currency that is legal tender in the place where mothers go.—The Youth's Companion.

See A Mother's Influence, preceding topic.

Are You a Successful Daughter?

There are five questions that a girl can ask herself to determine whether she is successful as a daughter. The first is, Do I really know what my mother is like?

What a question! Of course! Our mother is the one person always on hand, the one person we have a right to think that we do know well! But try to make a character sketch of your mother, working as carefully as Whistler worked when he painted a portrait of his mother. Don't be content with saying, "She is the darlingest mother in all the world!" Don't be content with classifying her as a type—the executive type, the emotional type, the self-immolating type. Stop generalizing for a moment.

Oriental Water Pots

Is your mother growing happier as time goes on? And if she is not, do you know why? Is she interested more in your friends than in your clothes or in your ideas? Is she creative? Is she good at matters of detail? Is she a good executive? Does she know how to allot work to others, or does she usually do it all herself? Do you find her charming rather as an adviser than as a sympathetic listener "after the fact"? In other words, do you naturally tell her about your plans beforehand, or do you wait until you have carried them out and then tell her what has happened? What do you think she would be now if she had never been married? Did you ever ask her what she would have liked to do if she had remained single? Do you know what are her chief satisfactions and anxieties?

If you can answer seventy-five per cent. of the whole question in all its branches, you know your mother a good deal better than most of us know our own.

The second question is altogether different from the first: Do my mother and I have a fair and square relaionship in financial matters? Is she too self-sacrificing? For example, do I know the relative expenses of my equipment and hers? Equipment includes clothing and belongings of all kinds.

Am I an asset or a liability to my mother? Can she count on me? Am I an assistant or a burden? A daughter can easily be her mother's first lieutenant; she can easily be her mother's first anxiety. Can your mother depend on you for certain regular assistance, for doing things that she needs never to think of? Can she be sure of you in an emergency?

The fourth question is, Do I give my mother all that she has earned? No one can truthfully answer it with a confident "yes." We are not able to repay our

mothers for the things that they have done to make us happy; day by day the debt is increasing in size, and there is no way of beginning to pay it. No mother keeps books on what she is doing for her daughter; no mother feels that she is a creditor. But there are certain things that every mother holds valuable, and there are rewards that every daughter can shower upon her mother if she realizes how precious they are. One is the spiritual reward of companionship. Mother and daughter need not be inseparable, but they should be confederates. The daughter who looks after the interests of her mother and works with her side by side on pet projects and plans, contributes something that her mother values more than she would value constant "shadowing" or anxious protection. Mothers do not want to be kept under glass; they want to be aided and supported in their plans.

The daughter who is tactful never "manages" her mother. She never makes crude attempts to "reform" any of her mother's ideas or ideals. She learns from them, discusses them with interest, and often she and her mother together arrive at conclusions that neither would have reached alone.

Every mother has earned the reward of loyalty. Loyalty demands the open road. Two countries that are loyal to each other as allies permit free negotiations and frequent exchanges of information. A mother has earned the right to know what her daughter is doing. She really has! In the most beautiful family life there is a general sharing of jokes, plans, disappointments, ambitions and friendships. Sometimes there are differences in temperament that forbid the perfect exchange of states of mind. But at least a girl's mother can be kept fully informed of what her daughter is doing from day to day. Some daughters believe in the principle that "what mother doesn't know she won't worry about." There is nothing that worries a mother so much as uncertainty.

The last question is, What kind of friendship are we building together for later years? The question is one that only years and years can settle. But five minutes of hard thinking will answer it for the present. The relation between mother and daughter can be the most beautiful window in the whole temple of home if artists are at work on it and if careless handling does not spoil the design.—Condensed from an article in The Youth's Companion by Frances Lester Warner.

The Whitneys' Mother's Day

Joan studied her engagement calendar for several minutes and then exclaimed in consternation. *"Girls!"* she cried. "Girls, do you know how many times mother has had us all here for supper for the past month? Exactly one day!"

"But—what of it?" Rose asked, perplexed.

"Wouldn't I like to be our mother!" Joan cried. "Take care of us through measles and whooping-cough and all the rest of it, and sew for us from daylight till dark, and plot and plan to give us everything she can possibly contrive, and then have us fly to all the corners of the earth for our good times, and never think of making any good times for her. We just don't deserve a mother!"

"But—what can we do? What does she want?" Peggy asked.

"She wants—us!" Joan cried back, with a little break in her voice. "Girls, let's promise here and now that one night each week shall be mother's—just hers. If folks come in they must realize that it's mother's night, and we are going to do things she likes and play the music she loves and—and eat the things she adores cooking for us. Lance and Jack will come, too—I know they will if we put it to them—so. Will you do it, girls?"

"We will," Rose and Peggy promised together. That was the way it began.—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons

To the one who walks in the Master's footsteps it affords joy to be thoughtful of others, even when himself in trouble, as the Master was thoughtful for his widowed mother.—Wilfred Grenfell.

Honor thy father and mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.—Exodus.

The love of a mother is never exhausted, never changes, endures through all.—Mæterlinck.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. How do we know from verse 24 that Mary and Joseph were poor? (Look up the Old Testament reference given in the footnote of your Bible.) 2. What is the meaning of the word *devout?* 3. Which one of the Beatitudes is our Golden Text? 4. Why, do you think, was this text chosen today?

SIMEON AND ANNA (The Insight of the Pure in Heart)

GOLDEN TEXT: Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Matthew 5.8

LESSON Luke 2.25-39 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 84.1-7

LUKE 2.25 And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 And it had been revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 And he came in the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, that they might do concerning him after the custom of the law, 28 then he received him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,

29 Now lettest thou thy servant depart, Lord,
According to thy word, in peace;
30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples;
32 A light for revelation to the Gentiles,
And the glory of thy people Israel.

33 And his father and his mother were marvelling at the things which were spoken concerning him; 34 and Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold this *child* is set for the falling and the rising of many in Israel; and for a sign which is spoken against; 35 yea and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul; that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed. 36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher (she was of a great age, having lived with a husband seven years from her virginity, 37 and she had been a widow even unto fourscore and four years), who departed not from the temple, worshipping with fastings and supplications night and day. 38 And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks unto God, and spake of him to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. 39 And when they had accomplished all things that were according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. NUNC DIMITTIS, 2.25-32. At the time of the birth of Jesus there was living in Jerusalem a righteous and devout (the Greek word means literally *God-fearing*) man named Simeon, who was looking for the coming of "the consolation of Israel," for the promised Messiah. "It is striking to observe how the description of Simeon's character expresses the aim of the whole Old Testament revelation. All that was meant by the preceding long series of manifestations through all those years was accomplished in the man. For hearken how he is described—'just and devout,' that is the perfection of moral character, stated in the terms of the Old Testament; 'waiting for the Consolation of Israel,' that is the ideal attitude which the whole of the gradual manifestation of God's increasing purpose running through the ages was intended to make the attitude of every true Israelite—an expectant, eager look forwards, and, in the present, the discharge of all duties to God and man. 'And the Holy Ghost was upon him,' that, too, in a measure, was the ultimate aim of the whole revelation of Israel. So this man stands as a bright, consummate flower which had at last effloresced from the roots; and in his own person, an embodiment of the very results which God had patiently sought through millenniums of providential dealing and inspiration" (Alexander Maclaren).

The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that before he died he should see the Lord's Anointed. "Some inward monition, which he recognized to be of God, sent him to the temple in the expectation that at last he was to see the Lord's Christ." When the parents brought in the child Jesus (see The Historical Background), Simeon took the Babe in his arms and blessed God and spoke the beautiful words which have received the name of *Nunc Dimittis,* the first two words of the sentence in Latin. "To Eastern minds poetry was a sort of native language. Its inspiration was in the air. Their ordinary speech was ornate and efflorescent, throwing itself out in simile and hyperbole. It only needed some small excitement, and they fell naturally into the couplet form of utterances. Even today the children swing under the mulberry-trees to songs and choruses; hucksters extol their wares in measured verse; and the Bethany fruit-girl sings in the market, 'O lady, take of our fruit, without money and without price; it is yours; take all that you will'! And so it need not surprise us, much less trouble us, that Simeon and Elisabeth, Zacharias and Mary, should each speak in measured cadences. Besides, they were now under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Sacred hymns are not the product of the unaided intellect. They do not come at the bidding of any human will. The human

mind, heart and life are but the instrument, a kind of Æolian harp, played upon by the Higher Breath, which comes and goes—how, the singer himself can never tell; for

'In the song
The singer has been lost.'" (Henry Burton).

"Now lettest thou thy servant depart, Lord, according to thy word (verse 26) in peace." In these words Simeon does not ask to die now that his greatest wish has been gratified, as many are wont to understand them. He simply states that he recognizes God's appointed time for his departure from earth is near. The Greek verb is the one used when a sentry's duty is over and he is dismissed: it is well translated in *Nunc Dimittis,* Now thou dost *send away*. He had fought the good fight, he had finished the course, he had kept the faith, and there was laid up for him the crown of righteousness—he was ready to be dismissed. The whole song is not one of mere submission to God's will, but of faith and joy and content. Fittingly has the Lutheran Church placed the song in its Communion Service. He was satisfied and at peace because he had seen the Messiah who would bring salvation to all nations, a light for the unveiling of the Gentiles (R V m.) and the glory of Israel.

"I covet the gift of a sanctified imagination, which can look down long highways into distant futurity. For instance, when an apostle like Paul walks into imperial Rome, utterly unheeded and ignored, I would like the power of being able to foresee some of the amazing possibilities of that lonely entrance. When James Gilmour crosses the frontier into Mongolia, and sets his single plow to the upturning of the soil in that mighty land, I would have the eye that can see coming harvests, vast reaches of waving corn, shining ripe before the face of the Lord. When the New Testament is translated into a new language, I would have the power of seeing the tremendous influence of the Book, the light it will bring, and the warmth, and the moving air, and the genial liberty" (J. H. Jowett).

II. SIMEON'S WORDS TO MARY, verses 33-35. Simeon blessed Joseph and Mary (Joseph fulfilled here the part of a father) who stood there marvelling at his words, and to Mary he said, "Behold, this Child is set for the falling and the rising of many in Israel": some will reject him and "fall," while some will accept him and "rise" to a high spiritual life. Compare Isaiah 8.14, He shall be for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense, and Matthew 21.44. "And for a sign which is spoken against." Recall Acts 28.22: as concerning this sect, we know everywhere that it is spoken against. "Yea, and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul": "a figure strong enough to cover the bitterest experiences of the Mater Dolorosa [Sorrowful Mother], but it does not necessarily imply prevision of the cross" (Expositor's Greek Testament). How Mary must have pondered over those words in the years to come!

"That thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed": the true character of men would be declared by their thoughts regarding Jesus. The word *that* does not refer to the statement just made before it, but to the result of the future life of the Babe, of which the mother's sorrow would be an incidental part.

"That is precisely what has happened to multitudes of lives through the teaching of Jesus. He has revealed to them the thoughts of their own hearts and taught them that their best self was their true self. When the prodigal is stirred to repentance, he 'comes to himself.' He had been dead and is alive again. He had lost himself, and now it is himself whom he finds. The faith of Jesus in men produced faith in themselves, and they discovered within themselves thoughts and motives of which they had not dreamed" (Francis Greenwood Peabody).

III. THE PROPHETESS ANNA, verses 36-38. There was an aged prophetess present named Anna, who had been a widow for eighty-four years, who was wont to go faithfully to the temple at the hours of prayer, worshiping with fasts and supplications. It is suggested that being a prophetess she may have lived in one of the temple chambers and may have done some regular work such as trimming the lamps there. Like Simeon, she recognized the Infant Jesus as the promised Messiah, and gave thanks, telling all who were looking for the One who was to bring redemption to Jerusalem that this was he. Gladness came into the world with the Babe of Bethlehem.

"William Canton, in his book about his little girl, describes the feeling

that shot through him when suddenly at night, she opened her eyes and looked at him:

'Heavens, how these steadfast eyes
Their eerie vigil kept!
Was it some angel in disguise
Who searched us while we slept,
Who winnowed every sin,
Who tracked each slip and fall,—
One of God's spies, not babykin,
Not babykin at all?'

Is there father or mother or anyone who has ever looked into the heart of a child who has not felt it? And is there any better way of describing the advent of a child into a home than to hear in it again this whisper of the God who would come in?" (James Reid).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Looking for the consolation of Israel, verse 25. Among the people of this time there were those who were called *Prosdechomenoi,* they that were waiting. Their minds were filled with the life of their nation in the past, they were mourning over her present degradation, her subjection to foreign power, and they were looking for the dawn of a better time which they called the Kingdom of God.

A sign which is spoken against, verse 34. To this day *Nuzrani,* Christian, is—after Jew—the most stinging term of reproach throughout Palestine. Among pagans the Christians were charged with cannibalism and every conceivable atrocity, and Suetonius, Pliny, Tacitus, have no gentler words for Christianity than "an execrable, extravagant, or malefic superstition."—F. W. Farrar, in Cambridge Bible.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The shepherds returned to their flocks, and told every one they met of the wonderful vision they had seen, and of the new-born Babe lying in the manger who was to be a great joy to all people. Soon afterwards a more comfortable abiding place was found for the Babe and his mother, and when he was eight days old, he received the name of Jesus. Forty days after his birth Mary and Joseph brought him to the temple to solemnly present him "before the Lord" as the first-born. The first-born of thy sons shalt thou give unto me, we read in Exodus 22.29. The custom grew out of the time when the oldest son was consecrated to the priesthood, and there was special fitness in the custom because of the memory of the Passover night when the first-born of the Israelites were saved in the destruction that overtook the Egyptians. The presentation to the priest was an acknowledgment of God's claim, and by the payment of five shekels the Babe was redeemed and given back to his parents.

On the same day the rite of ceremonial purification was fulfilled by Mary, as in the Court of the Women she presented to the priest her offering of a pair of turtle-doves. Had she not been poor she would have given a lamb for the burnt offering. It was after the cloud of incense had poured forth from the Golden altar within the Holy Place of the temple, that the sacrifices were offered on the great stone altar before the door of the Holy Place, while Mary and the other worshipers without prayed and praised God. It was as she was leaving the Court with her Babe that she was met by Simeon.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

HOW SEEING GOD DEPENDS ON CHARACTER

Beginning the Lesson

A drawing of great beauty has been recently discovered in New York which is said to have been by Blake. It shows this scene of our lesson. In the center stands the aged Simeon holding reverently in his hands the Babe. Beside him stands Anna, the prophetess, bending low in meek obeisance. Kneeling at the feet of Simeon are Mary and Joseph. The doves, brought for a sacrificial offering, are at his feet. Round about is a group of priests, whose faces express astonishment or disbelief.

When Bishop Brent was visiting in Japan he was asked to officiate at a baptism

of Japanese converts. There were three old people waiting to be baptized, and the first to come forward was an old, old man.

"What is your name?" the Bishop asked. And the old man answered, "Simeon," and then he smiled and added, "For mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

What a reverent understanding this old man's choice of a name showed! Let us see if we have gained as much as this aged Japanese had from the story of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple.

The End Lies in the Beginning

The aged Simeon held in his arms the month-old Babe and said exultantly, "Now, Lord, mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." "Simeon had not seen the salvation at all," writes Mr. Frederick Lynch in Christian Work. "He had seen nothing of the wonderful things Jesus was going to do during the next thirty years; he had seen nothing of the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem to Greece, Rome, then Europe and America; had seen nothing of the miraculous transformations it was going to work; nothing of that salvation that has been the one glory of over two thousand years; he saw simply a little Baby in its mother's arms. Yet he had seen it, for he had seen the light lighted, and having once been lighted, it must light all the world; he had seen the truth-Speaker, and when the Speaker comes the truth will go on until it sets all men free; he had seen the presence of God in the Infant's eyes, and the incarnation in one Man means the incarnation in all men some day; he had seen the love-light in the Child's face, and let one man begin to love as God loves, and then some day love will become the law of humanity. Simeon looked on Christ and then his eyes swept the future in prophetic vision and he saw all these things coming to pass. The end lay in the beginning.

"And there came to me a flood of other instances where this same vision had come to other men. I remembered the old Roman story. The Gospels say little about slavery. The Epistles do not denounce it as an institution; they only urge a Christian attitude toward the slave. The early Church had little to say about it. But there was one man in Rome who had felt that slavery was inhuman, and contradicted the laws of God. One day he entered one of the new Christian churches, and, to his amazement, he saw a master and slaves kneeling side by side at the same altar, receiving the communion together as equals—for the moment, at least—and he said, in spirit, 'Now, O Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen my heart's desire—the end of slavery.' The end? Yes. It lasted nearly two thousand years. It filled Africa, Asia, Europe and America with misery and cost rivers of human blood. He saw no diminution of the custom. Yet he had seen the end when he saw that master and that slave kneeling together there."

Mr. Lynch recalls also how Stanley found Livingstone dying in the heart of Africa, alone, except for the natives who loved and tended him. And how Livingstone, who had made no more impression on the vast continent of darkness than a candle makes in the Mammoth Cave, died with a light in his face, saying that Africa had been saved to Christ and civilization—died singing, with Simeon, "Now, O Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." And truly he saw it. It is coming fast.

The Vision of Simeon and the Vision of Zacharias

Both sing of "salvation." Zacharias saw the spiritual nature of this near salvation, and he described it in words singularly deep and accurate; but its breadth he did not seem to realize. The theocracy was the atmosphere in which he lived and moved; and even his vision was theocratic, and so somewhat narrow. His "Benedictus" was for the "God of Israel," and the "redemption" he sang was for "his people." The "horn of salvation" is for "us"; and all through his psalm these first personal pronouns are frequent and emphatic as if he would still insulate this favored people, and give them a monopoly even of "redemption." The aged Simeon, however, stands on a high Pisgah. His is the nearer and the clearer vision. Standing as he does in the Court of the Gentiles, and holding in his arms the Infant Christ, "The Lord's Christ," he sees in him a Savior for humanity, still "the glory of God's people Israel," but likewise "a light for the unveiling of the Gentiles." Like the sentry who keeps watch through the night till the sunrise, Simeon had been watching and longing for the Dayspring from on high, reading from the stars of promise the

nearing of the night, and with the music of fond hopes "keeping his heart awake till dawn of morn." Now at length the consummation which is the consolation, comes. Simeon sees a salvation "prepared before the face of all people." And seeing this he sees all his desires.—Henry Burton, in The Expositor's Bible.

The Insight of the Pure in Heart

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God! That word was the last thing that many of Christ's countrymen expected or desired. There was an old saying which had made a deep impression on their minds, that the vision of God is something too awesome for human eyes. "No man can see God," it was said, "and live." The very name of God for their forefathers was too sacred for them to take upon their lips in common speech. Now Jesus tells them quite simply and frankly that if only they are pure in heart they would see God, and not only would they not die, but he went so far as to say in his whole teaching that without this vision of God no man can really live.

What does Jesus mean by seeing God? Where are we to look for him? Is this an experience which can happen to ordinary people living an ordinary life? All these questions flash into the mind when we think of seeing God.

One thing is certain, it was a matter of daily experience with Jesus. He saw God day by day, and lived in a world that was alive with his presence. He did not need to leave the busy world to find God. We are apt to imagine that when he left his disciples and the crowd for the solitude of the hillside he was going apart to listen for a voice and feel the touch of a presence which he could not know in the ordinary world of care and duty. That is a wrong view to take. He went apart to speak with God in prayer in direct communion, and to recover the jaded spirit that was wearied with the burden of the world. Even the ship's compass needs to be taken into a quiet place where it may be reset and recover its capacity to be responsive to the touch of the magnetic currents, but it is in the ocean amid the daily buffeting of winds and storms that it is to find the contact with these currents which will make it an instrument for guiding. So it was with Jesus. He was in daily touch with God. Life was a parable in which he read God's message. The needs of the world were a challenge in which he heard God's voice. Nature was a mirror in which he saw the reflection of the father's love. The very rain and sunshine falling on the good and evil brought to his soul the sense of the unfailing love, while the deeper experiences, the bitter experiences, were marked with a shining pathway of duty in which he discerned the will of God. The whole of life was sacramental of God's love. Its vital meaning was discovered through his contact with God in it. He saw God in everything: that was the secret of life for Jesus. Even when the cross lifted up its dark shadow and engulfed his spirit in its black depths, he was heard to cry, "Father!" for even there he found God and knew his fellowship. He saw God because he was pure in heart. Now it is in this sense that he means us to see God.

The fact is that until we see God there is no real and intelligible meaning in life. There is one thing to be said about the theory of the love of God, even if it were only a theory: it is the only credible and intelligible explanation of the world. But it only becomes convincing when we find that love working through everything. Life for many people is a thing which is good in shreds and patches, and for others a thing of sound and fury signifying nothing. But when you see God in it and find him there, the world becomes the Father's house. We have entered even here the spiritual country.

But how to see God in life, that is the point, that is the great secret. It needs the interpreting mind, as everything does. You have got to be in the right attitude, says Jesus, if you are going to see God.

It is like looking at a stained glass window. If you would see its beauty and read its message you have to be within. Outside it is only a dark blur, but stand within where the light falls through it, and the full glass bursts into a message and a picture. So it is with God. Get the right attitude! See life with a light shining through it. And this is the right spirit, the true attitude: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God!

Now, what does Jesus mean by being pure in heart? We often misconstrue it. We think of a heart that is clean of all base or impure desires. But it means more than that: it means a heart that is simple and sincere. Purity of heart is single-mindedness of purpose. It is sincerity, to put it in a word. And that is the mark of a really Christian spirit.

There are many kinds of insincerity. There is the insincerity which comes of prejudice. A man is prejudiced against the truth and the light of God because of something he has heard, or seen, or experienced, or imagined. He refuses to let any light get past these blinders which would make him widen his view. He is not sincere, though he may not be conscious of the fact.

Another man may be prejudiced against the light of God because of his view of the universe. He starts out with some theory about its being a bad world, or a muddled world, or with some grudge against God. When sorrow comes, it makes him bitter, or hard. He does not find God in it because he does not believe God can be found there. He goes through life looking for things which will confirm his theory, and he finds them. If we think the world is a bad world, a world without God, we will find plenty of arguments to confirm it in our minds. The very light will become darkness. For the world reflects the mood with which we face it. The grumbler finds plenty of food for grumbling. It is a strange thing, but life is the kind of experience that blinds our eyes to God if we will not open them wide enough to see him. The world will harden the heart which will not permit it to soften it.

Some are prejudiced against seeing God by their ideal of life. To see God would knock up so many of their cherished dreams, it would work such changes in their outlook. To see God in the need of the world would give them what some one calls a pain in the mind. To find God in some brother at their side would mean smashing up a good many of their social values. To hear God calling them to a lowly way or a hard duty would mean pulling down their idols of success and shattering their ambitious dreams. To follow Jesus in his love for men as men would open up many strange friendships. It would alter their whole world, and so they shut their eyes. They are not sincere. Their motives are all of self. They are not out for the highest, for the life that Jesus has made to shine. And their world remains what it is, a place unlit by God; their failure no beautiful valley where life becomes rich with new meanings; their sorrows untouched by any radiance of divine companionship. They do not want God's way for them, and life has no divine footprints. They do not want the Christlike spirit, and life has no power to shape them to his likeness.

But the pure in heart, the sincere, the people who are open to life at every point and who meet it with the faith that God is in it, are seeking for nothing except to find him there. Whatever his voice may say or wherever his hand may beckon, the pure in heart are blessed, for they see God.

How do we reach this sincerity, this purity of heart? The pure in heart is found where God himself is found, in the shadow of Jesus. He is the light, and light both quickens the eyes to see and illumines what we look at. That is what Christ came to do for us and our world, to open our eyes and to light up our world. We see God in him and in life by a lamp of need and faith which Christ kindles in our hearts. "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life!"—Condensed from a Sermon by James Reid.

Suggestions for Bible Class Discussion

1. The beauty of devout old age.
2. A Saint's welcome of approaching death.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. For what purpose is the law? 2. Why is it that those led by the Spirit are not under the law? 3. What is your definition of temperance? 4. What is President Hoover's attitude toward the enforcement of the Eighteenth Amendment? 5. What measures would help to make prohibition effective and permanent?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE INSIGHT OF THE PURE IN HEART

Beginning the Lesson

In the book entitled In Korea with Marquis Ito, there is a pathetic story told of what happened at the home of a missionary who lived near the barracks where the Japanese were quartered until they could be sent to take their part in the war being carried on in China. An officer came upon the porch of the house, and accepted gratefully a cup of tea offered him, but could not tell the object of his visit, as he did not speak English. He soon left and returned with some twenty comrades. And

when the hostess was becoming somewhat alarmed at the number for whom she might be expected to furnish tea and cakes, one of the company explained in broken English that they had come to see the baby, a girl about two years old.

The little one was brought out by the mother and placed in the arms of the speaker, who carried her along the line formed of his comrades and gave each one a chance to see her, to smile at her, and to say a few words to her in an unknown tongue.

On going away, after this somewhat formal paying of respects to the baby, the Japanese officer still further explained. "Madam," said he, "tomorrow morning we are going to the front, and we do not expect ever to return. But before we go to die, we wanted to bid good-by to the baby."

The number of the regiment to which these soldiers belonged was taken note of by the mother. Their expectations came true; they did not return.

In Palestine in the year four of our era there was an aged man who had longed to bid good-by before he died to a wonderful Babe. Who was the man? What do you know about him? Who was the Babe? Where did he see the Babe? Who had brought him there? Why? How did he know him?

The Insight of the Pure in Heart

What is the topic of our lesson? How did Simeon know Jesus? What is the heading of our lesson? Simeon and Anna: the Insight of the Pure in Heart. Simeon recognized the Lord's Christ in the Babe he held so reverently in his arms because he had the insight of the pure in heart. Like the rest of his nation, he was looking for the Messiah, but while most men expected Jesus to be a king who should free them from the Romans, their foreign rulers, Simeon's heart and character had prepared him for a spiritual Ruler, the Savior from sin and the Glory of Israel, and the Light to the Gentiles. In simple faith he had gone into the temple that day, and when he saw the Babe his heart told him that here was the long-looked-for Savior.

The Pure in Heart Shall See God

Who are the pure in heart? "As purity, when affirmed of other things such as water, air, glass, means freedom from mixture; so purity of heart means singleness of moral aim, freedom from all alloys, whether insincerity, distraction, hate. Not that the pure in heart are absolutely sinless, for none is good save One, even God. But the pure in heart are the simple-thoughted, the clear-purposed, the straightforward, in one word, the guileless."

The reward promised the pure in heart is the ability to see God.

> Who shall ascend into the hill of Jehovah?
> And who shall stand in his holy place?

The Psalmist questioned, and then replied:

> He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;
> Who hath not lifted up his soul unto falsehood,
> And hath not sworn deceitfully.

And Jesus repeats the imagery and says that the pure in heart are blessed for they shall see God, meaning that they shall have access to him, shall enjoy communion with him. It is only the pure in heart who have the capacity for seeing God. To the hardened sinner, to the indifferent, or the heedless, God cannot reveal himself, for they cannot grasp divine revelation. The secret of the Lord is only with them that fear him.

How Do We See God?

Not by our physical sight, do we? Jesus said, "God is a Spirit," and a spirit is not visible to the eyes we carry in our faces. We see God with the heart or with the soul of us. We see him with our understanding. God is not the only person we see in this way. We see one another like this. You and I are just as invisible as God in our real selves, and we can never truly see each other till our hearts, our real selves, are seeking for each other. There are other things we see only with the eyes of our mind—the motion of the earth, for example, and many other facts of science that are too small or too big to be seen with the physical eye.

The fact is that "the heart" or "the soul" is our instrument for knowing and seeing

God. So that this beatitude is like some one saying, "Blessed is he whose telescope lens is entirely clean and pure, for he shall see the stars truly."

Keep your soul a spotless mirror in which may be reflected the face of your Maker.—Albert D. Belden, in Following the King.

How to Know God

There stands a piano whose strings are out of tune; they are so loose they will produce no musical tone. An orchestra enters the room. The musicians file to their places and take their seats. There are the snare drummer, the bass drummer, the tuba player, the trombonist, the bass violinist, and the rest. They strike a strain of music, and I go to the piano and say, "That is fine music, is it not?" The piano says, "I am not aware that there is any music. I cannot see it; I cannot hear it; I cannot feel it; I do not know it." "But," I say, "look at the man on the right with the stick in his hand. See how he beats the drum? Do you not know that beating the drum in that way makes a noise? Look at the trombonist. See how his cheeks are swelled! Watch his hand as it flies back and forth, increasing and decreasing the sounding chamber. See the bass violinist as he draws his bow across the strings of his instrument. Do you not know that there must be music when all this is going on?" But the piano answers, "It is no evidence to me that there is music, that the drummer waves his hand, or the trombonist stretches his cheeks, or the violinist moves his bow arm."

I find myself unable to convince the piano that there is music in the room. Presently, an idea occurs to me. I call for the piano tuner. He comes and stretches the strings, octave by octave, key by key, till every string is tuned to proper tension in concert pitch. When he has finished, the orchestra starts its music again, and I say to the piano, "Is there music in the room?" And the piano answers me with a soft echo to every strain of every instrument in the entire band. It reflects the harmony, it throws back the melody, it enters sympathetically into the music, and I say to the piano, "How do you know that there is music in the room? Do you see now the drummer's hand moving? The trombonist's cheeks swelling? And the violinist's bow arm moving?" But the piano answers, "I know that there is music in the room, because I am tuned to concert pitch."

"So," says Jesus, "blessed are the pure in heart, those whose moral purposes are sincere; for they need no argument to prove the existence of God. They see him. They know him."

Only a pure mirror reflects a perfect image. A soul of love reflects a God of love. Put out of your life all that fails to harmonize with infinite justice, mercy and unselfish love; put in all that you believe belongs to a character on the pattern of Jesus, and to you the Good Father will become an abiding presence.—Henry Stiles Bradley, in Christianity as Taught by Christ.

When He Shall Dwell with Thee

I asked the angels in my prayer,
  With bitter tears and pains,
To show mine eyes the kingdom where
  The Lord of Glory reigns.

. . . . . .

Thou needest not ask the angels where
  His habitation be;
Keep thou thy spirit clean and fair,
  And he shall dwell with thee.—Alice Cary.

Sentence Sermon

Each one of us is revealed, like Simeon, by the things that make us satisfied and happy.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Who wrote the Epistle to the Galatians? 2. Where was Galatia? 3. What does Paul mean when he speaks of the Galatians biting and devouring one another? 4. What did Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount say about good and evil fruit? 5. Commit to memory the list given as the fruit of the Spirit. 6. What does self-control mean? 7. What verse gives the secret of self-control?

WORLD'S TEMPERANCE SUNDAY (Spiritual Weapons in a World War)

GOLDEN TEXT: Every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things. Corinthians 9.25

LESSON Galatians 5.13-26 DEVOTIONAL READING Romans 14.13-21

GALATIANS 5. 13 For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only *use* not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another. 14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. 15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

16 But I say, Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would. 18 But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these:* fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, 21 envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 meekness, self-control; against such there is no law. 24 And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.

25 If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk. 26 Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. CHRISTIAN FREEDOM, verse 13. "Brothers," wrote Paul to the Galatians, "you are free from the Law, but Christian freedom does not mean that you can do as you please." Liberty and license are not synonymous. Do not use your freedom as a license for indulging your lower impulses, but serve one another in love. "Flesh" is used here for "that element of man's nature which is opposed to goodness and makes for evil. It signifies the entire potency of sin."

"A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to all" (Martin Luther).

II. THE CHRISTIAN LOVE, verses 14, 15. Through loving service for others, you fulfil the whole divine law, which is, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Paul here quotes Leviticus 19.18. Then, recalling the fact that the Galatians were prone to quarrel, Paul adds, "But if ye bite and devour one another (act toward one another like dogs or wild beasts), beware lest you destroy one another."

"Mutual backbiting and hatred can only end in the destruction of one another's spiritual life."

III. ANTAGONISTIC SPIRITS, verses 16-18. Submit to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all your acts, Paul counsels, and then you will not fulfil the desire of your evil nature, for the evil nature and the Holy Spirit are antagonistic. The Spirit strives to prevent your obeying your evil nature, and your evil nature strives to hinder you from obeying the Spirit, for they are at warfare one with the other, and prevent your doing what you would. "Paul's theory seems to be this: Man's glory lies in his will. In him, however, are two hostile forces. The flesh seeks ascendency, urging him to choose the things he likes. The Spirit urges him to unite himself with God and things divine, to use his will to govern his life according to spiritual motives."

"Are we conscious of this dualism? Do we know anything in ourselves corresponding to Stevenson's story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde? Is it a hardship, a disadvantage, to have this conflict for the possession of our wills? Paul says, No. A life that is disciplined blossoms to loveliness and becomes fruitful" (John Gardner).

"If you are led by the Spirit, Paul continues, you are not under the Law, for you will not disobey it."

"Law exists for the purpose of restraint, but in the works of the Spirit there is nothing to restrain" (Lightfoot).

IV. WORKS OF EVIL, verses 19-21. The works of the flesh are plainly seen, Paul declares, and then gives a repelling list of some fifteen vices which were common among the Galatians. "The horrid enumeration follows a natural order. The list begins with sins against self; then come what were more directly sins against God; finally, there are the sins against society" (A. W. Robinson). "The words fall into four groups. The first group includes three sins in which sensuality in the narrower sense is prominent; the second includes two that are associated with heathen religions; the third group contains eight in which the conflict with others is present; the fourth consists of drunkenness and its natural accompaniments." "I tell you plainly, even as I did on my visits to you" (Gal. 1.9; 4.13), Paul adds, "that they who practise such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God."

"It may be pointed to as a proof of depravity that vocabularies have more words descriptive of forms of sin than words descriptive of forms of holiness" (R. Finlayson).

V. WORKS OF THE SPIRIT, verses 22-24. He who is governed by the inner Spirit is not content merely to refrain from breaking the law; he exercises positive virtues such as Paul now enumerates: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control. Note that *self-control* takes the place in the Revised Version of *temperance* in the King James Version. This is because we have limited the word *temperance* to abstinence from spirituous liquor, whereas it concerns the avoidance of many evils, and has been well defined as "a practised mastery of self," self-control. "Against such there is no law." Paul is content to remark—not without a touch of irony in his tone—that these things do not seem to call for the interference of legislation! (A. W. Robinson).

"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Paul).

VI. THE FINAL COUNSEL, verses 25, 26. If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk. Walking by the Spirit is the effect of living by the Spirit. If the Divine Spirit has control of our spirit, then we are living righteously.

"Walk is greater than talk, and it is much more easy to talk about our walk than walk our talk" (Dan Crawford).

Again Paul refers to the quarreling and its causes, saying, "Let us not become vainglorious (boastful), provoking one another, envying one another."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, verse 20. All these were evils especially prevalent in the cities of Asia Minor. So great was the rivalry and wrangling among the cities that the Emperor was called upon to settle rival claims for the honor of first place in a province.

Drunkenness, revelings, and such like, verse 21. The remains of the later Greek comedy, and the paintings on Greek vases, show how characteristic and universal such revels were in the Greek cities. Komos, revel, was made a god, and his rites were carried on quite systematically, and yet with all the ingenuity and inventiveness of the Greek mind, which lent perpetual novelty and variety to the revelings.—Wm. M. Ramsey.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The people to whom Paul wrote this letter lived in Galatia, the Roman province which extended from north to south across the central plateau of Asia Minor. In Southern Galatia were the cities where Paul founded churches on his second missionary journey—Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. He visited Galatia again on his third missionary journey. Then two or three years later he wrote this letter.

It looked to the Galatians as though Paul's teaching, that followers of Christ

were not under the law, would lead to lawlessness. In the beginning of the fifth chapter Paul tells them that Christ sets them free from the bondage of the old law, and urges them to hold fast their freedom. Then in our lesson text he tells them not to err in thinking that freedom from the requirements of the law means disobedience to its spirit, which is that of love to others. "To men who have been accustomed to think of law as the only obstacle to free self-indulgence, or to those who have not been accustomed to high ethical standards, freedom from the law was easily taken to mean that for the Christian there is nothing to stand in the way of the unrestrained indulgence of his own impulses. Of this danger Paul is well aware (Rom. 6.1; Phil. 3.17; Col. 3.1), and beginning with this verse he addresses himself vigorously to meeting and arresting it."

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Why teach temperance to intermediate and senior grade pupils in the church school? To supplement the work of the public schools, where scientific temperance instruction is sometimes neglected. And even when well taught in the public schools, temperance instruction is merely about the physical facts, never about the moral facts. "The young boys and girls of today are the most important factors in the ultimate settlement of the liquor problem. If America is to become a land free from intoxicating liquor for the sake of the boys and girls of tomorrow, it will be necessary to teach the truth about alcohol to the boys and girls of today."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

Beginning the Lesson

For our World's Temperance Sunday we have as text a section of Paul's letter to the Galatians. The verses fall under six subheads (see Explanations and Comments), any one of which would furnish sufficient food for thought and discussion for our entire lesson period. Let us hastily survey them, and take up our tremendous group topic—Making Prohibition Effective and Permanent.

President Hoover on Law Enforcement and Law Obedience

Upon assuming the office of President, Mr. Hoover requested the members of his cabinet to personally keep the Eighteenth Amendment to our Constitution. It was a surprise to learn from newspaper correspondents that although the White House in the preceding administration had been "dry," there were homes of the President's official family where the law was not observed. President Hoover rightly believes that chiefs of departments of the government must set the example and strictly obey the law of the land.

In his inaugural address, President Hoover promised a fact-finding commission to ascertain the extent and the causes of the failure of the enforcement of the law, and the actual results of the law, and announced his determination to secure such a reorganization of the federal courts as will make the administration of justice more swift and certain. And in the following words he appealed to the conscience and loyalty of the citizens of the country:

"A large responsibility rests directly upon our citizens. There would be little traffic in illegal liquor if only criminals patronized it. We must awake to the fact that this patronage from large numbers of law-abiding citizens is supplying the rewards and stimulating crime.

"I have been selected by you to execute and enforce the laws of the country. I propose to do so to the extent of my own abilities, but the measure of success that the government shall attain will depend upon the moral support which you, as citizens, extend.

"The duty of citizens to support the laws of the land is coequal with the duty of their government to enforce the laws which exist. No greater national service can be given by men and women of good will—who, I know, are not unmindful of the responsibilities of citizenship—than that they should, by their example, assist in stamping out crime and outlawry by refusing participation in and condemning all transactions with illegal liquor.

"Our whole system of self-government will crumble either if officials elect what laws they will enforce or citizens elect what laws they will support. For our citizens to patronize the violation of a particular law on the ground that they are opposed to it is destructive of the very basis of all that protection of life, of homes and

property which they rightly claim under other laws. If citizens do not like a law, their duty as honest men and women is to discourage its violation; their right is openly to work for its repeal."

The Principle of the Prohibition Amendment Must Be Made Popular in the Public Mind

By some inspiring and persuasive method the general public must be brought to see the moral worth, the economic advantage, and the national blessing of this law. Only as the people themselves believe in a law is there hope of complete obedience. The noisy minority in America who disclaim belief in this legislation must be converted. The solid public opinion of the world is pretty well fixed in its love for those laws whch guarantee society against theft and kindred sins. Can we not bring the public mind of our great cities to regard this prohibition legislation as one of the surest safeguards of community and national liberty? Can we not get the mind of the unconvinced but influential few to relinquish their cry of personal liberty in favor of national liberty? What is the value or urgency of individual appetite as compared with the economic and moral advancement of the whole nation?

There are several methods of action open to all believers in the law. One is to keep the letter of the law meticulously and rigidly. Be a total abstainer under all circumstances. Make clear to every group of which one is a part the absolute conviction that the law is righteous and for the good of the country. We should not keep it merely because it is on the statute books, but because we believe it ought to be there. There should be no uncertainty as to where the respectable members of American society stand on this matter.

Train the rising generation in church school and in public school in the merit and necessity of temperance and prohibition. Here, likewise, much will depend upon the example of parents, teachers, and older citizens. Let the red-blooded boys and the idealistic girls of America grow into advocates of this law, and we will see its complete victory in the next generation. Every patriotic demonstration should have something of education in it. This law, and the good expected from it, should bring forth one of those historic and patriotic ideals which stir young America with fervor and national zeal. The country will have to be put upon its honor to write this ideal into the hearts of its citizens.—Condensed from an Article in The Church School Journal by E. Leigh Mudge.

The Situation before the Prohibition Law Must Be Visualized

Do you remember that old liquor traffic? In 1912 the Retail Liquor Dealers' Association met in Ohio. Here is an excerpt from one of the speeches:

"We must create the appetite for liquor in the growing boys. Men who drink . . . will die, and if there is no new appetite created, our counters will be empty as well as our coffers. The open field for the creation of appetite is among the boys. Nickels expended in treats to boys now, will return in dollars to your tills after the appetite has been formed."

Do you remember that old liquor traffic? This last week a friend of mine said that his boy, aged twelve, had just remarked to him, "Father, what is a saloon?" Agreed that the present situation is unsatisfactory—let us not forget the situation which we faced before!

This last summer in Europe I read constantly in the papers distressing reports about the disclosures in Philadelphia: corrupt collusion between bootleggers and the police force, with stipends regularly passing from the law-breakers to the city officials. Distressing, is it not? To hear some people talk about it you would suppose that this wicked bribery of civic officialdom had now for the first time been launched on us by prohibition. Do you remember that old liquor traffic when there was hardly a town in the United States that was not thoroughly honeycombed with corruption from the organized trade? In Pennsylvania in 1914, as the result of one investigation only, approximately one hundred liquor corporations and associations were indicted for violation of the conspiracy section of the federal criminal code, and scarcely any of them bothered to defend the action. They cynically paid the fine.

Here in New York, we are commonly informed that prohibition does not prohibit and that we are in a bad way. I should suppose that obvious, but do you recall the old New York? Some of you should remember back to 1884, the year of the "Boodle" Board of Aldermen—twelve saloon-keepers, four saloon-controlled poli-

ticians, sixteen out of twenty-four. That same year, out of a thousand Democratic and Republican primaries and conventions held in this city, six hundred and thirty-three were held in saloons and ninety-six in places next door to them.

This use of memory to visualize the situation before prohibition should be insisted on. Large numbers of the younger generation never saw this sort of thing, never lived, as some of us have done, in towns like Boston with one saloon license for every three hundred and ten inhabitants, where Ten Nights in a Bar Room was no fairy tale but a literal story to whose characters we, from the number of our friends, could append specific names.

This summer I met a youth returning from his first trip to Europe. He never had seen a publicly licensed saloon system in operation. He saw it in Britain—public houses with wire cages in front of them where little children, not allowed by law to be taken inside the public house, were poured and huddled to fight like cats and dogs, while their mothers were inside getting drunk. This young man said to me: "I have never been for prohibition but I am now. If that is what it means to have a publicly licensed saloon system, then this thing we have in the United States, bad as it is, is better than that."—From a Sermon by Harry Emerson Fosdick.

The Program which the Christian Church Should Stand behind in Dealing with the Prohibition Question

First, we will fight to the last ditch any step that looks like going back to the saloon. We know well that we have an unsatisfactory situation on our hands. We are not for a moment content with it, but we know it is better than the thing we got rid of.

Second, as long as the present laws are on the books we will stand for their observance and enforcement. We will no more supinely surrender to the lawlessness of bootlegging than we supinely surrendered to the even more extensive and financially powerful lawlessness of the old saloon régime.

Third, there are some types of solution to which we never will consent, and one is putting the government, state or national, into the liquor business. We have refused so far to entrust the ownership and management of railroads to the government, although theoretical arguments make government ownership and management of railroads altogether reasonable. We have seen clearly that the government is not yet fit to handle that immense accession of economic power. Far less safe is it to make our national and state capitols the headquarters of the most corrupting business this country has ever seen.

Fourth, as to any alterations in the law, we will trust them to those whom we know to be friendly to the law's major intent. There may well come a time when the law should be changed. No law is infallible. But whoever proposes to construct and carry through such alterations would better first of all persuade the people of the church that he is sympathetic with the major aim for which the law originally was framed.—From a Sermon by Harry Emerson Fosdick.

Reform the Movies, the Radio, and the Press

Millions of children and young people attend the movies and see scenes which make drinking seem humorous, or a happy social event, or at least interesting and sporty. Frequently speakers on the radio in discussing other topics introduce remarks against prohibition, and emphasize or distort the present unsatisfactory situation, with never a reminder that the liquor question has always been "abominably unsatisfactory" and was far worse before our prohibition law was enacted. In our great cities a large part of the population is foreign-born and "wet," and the press naturally publishes a constant stream of "wet" propaganda which has a great influence.

Work for the Enlightenment of Europe

Europe is the center of the liquor business of the world. European ships carry vast cargoes of brandies, wines and beers to every port of the world. It is a miracle of enforcement that so many American ports have been able to cope with the situation in any degree whatever. The continents of the world have been deluged with European drinks for four hundred years. The economic pressure behind this business is a strong force for the annulment of prohibition. Wars have been fought for the liquor traffic. National treasuries profit by it. And even ecclesiastical systems encourage and support it. Inherited social custom, eco-

nomic gain, and the prejudice of pride make the average ruling European the enemy of all efforts at the control or the elimination of the drinking practise. Some spiritual and persuasive power must be found by which the countries of Europe can be convinced that their own people and the whole world would profit morally and economically by the limitation and final prohibition of liquor drinking. One great way to achieve this desirable result is for America to make her law so respected and loved by our own citizens that they will cheerfully and loyally and wholeheartedly obey it.—E. Leigh Mudge.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. A good reason for enforcing the Eighteenth Amendment is in a statement made by a Roman Catholic bishop in New Zealand: "For her beneficent action of building up character in the individual soul, the Church needs a favorable environment which the State ought to provide."

2. Maybe some people drink more under prohibition than before there was prohibition; maybe some persons drink now who never drank before prohibition; but there is no maybe about the fact of there being more non-drinking men today than ever before, and in non-drinking persons you find the great economic values.—An industrial executive.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What is your appraisement of Peter? 2. What characteristics of Peter are those of the average man today? 3. What were the causes that led to Peter's denial of his Lord? 4. How could his fall have been prevented? 5. What do we know about Peter's strength after Christ's death? How does Paul in Eph. 6.10-18 say that we may keep from falling?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE SECRET OF SELF-CONTROL

Beginning the Lesson

Begin with Explanations and Comments.

The Flesh Lusteth against the Spirit

I have thrown the throttle open and am tearing down God's track;
I have thrown it out to full-speed and no hand can hold me back!
'Tis my arm controls the engine, though Another owns the rail,
But for once I'm in the open and the yardlights pass and pale!

Green lights! Red lights! God has hung his signals out!
Caution here! Danger ho! And what's the man about?
'Tis true he owns the Engine, to do as he has done,
But how about the Final Word—when he ends the run?

So from siding on to junction point now I shall have my day;
I have stopped to read no orders, but I take the right-of-way,
Down the open grade I thunder and around the curve I swing,
For my hand is on the throttle and my heart shall have its fling!

Light lost! Life lost! Flag, O flag the others back!
Switch the wreck! Ditch the wreck! Dare any block God's track?
There creeps into the Terminal the man who had his day,
But I wonder, O my soul, just what his God will say!—Arthur Stringer.

The Truth about Drinking in the Colleges

Here is what President Wilbur of Leland Stanford University in California says:

"There is no doubt that there has been a marked decrease in the use of alcoholic beverages among the college students with whom I come in contact. Compared with the period before the present laws were put into effect, I should say that we have only one-tenth of the problem we had at that time in connection with liquor."

Jump the continent and come to Yale. Here is Professor Charles C. Clark of the Disciplinary Committee of Yale speaking under oath:

"I am not a prohibitionist, and have never been. I will admit to you, however, that the effect of prohibition at Yale University has been good. I know whereof I speak, for I have been a member of the Committee on Discipline from a time

dating back many years before prohibition. I know conditions intimately. I do not pretend that the students are prohibitionists or are not drinking, but the change has been simply revolutionary. In the old days our Committee was constantly busy with cases involving intoxication and the disorders originating from it. Now we have practically no business of the kind at all to transact. Moreover, this is in spite of the fact that in the old days we rarely troubled ourselves about a case of mere intoxication if it had not resulted in some kind of public disorder, whereas now intoxication of itself is regarded as calling for the severest penalty."

If you are thinking of the academies, listen to Principal Stearns of Phillips Andover, as he sums up a nation-wide investigation of the secondary schools.

"The schools reporting," he says, "are practically unanimous in their testimony that drinking among undergraduates is steadily on the wane, while a number emphasize the fact that the past year has proved the best on record."

I do not mean that you cannot get contrary evidence on this point. You can get contrary evidence on any point. But I am certain that this represents the overwhelming majority of those who speak with authoritative knowledge about colleges and schools.—From a Sermon by Harry Emerson Fosdick.

Self-control

The word *self-control* as Paul uses it here is a broader term than *temperance*. It is the opposite not only of drunkenness but of many other evils. It is a virtue that every Christian needs, whatever his special temptations may be. He who is self-controlled is temperate not only in eating and drinking but in the use of all good things. Possibly you need to be more temperate in reading, for example; it may be that you indulge your love for this good thing to so great an extent that it takes the time which you should be giving to Christian service. There is much food for reflection in Emerson's remark: "How dare I read Washington's campaigns when I have not answered my letters? Much of our reading is a pusillanimous desertion of our world to gaze after our neighbors." Herbert Spencer was once asked by a young man to play billiards with him at the Athenæum Club. Mr. Spencer played once, and then the young man took his cue and played so expertly that he finished the game in one run. Taking his hat Mr. Spencer said: "Moderate proficiency in such a sport is a sign of good education; such mastership, however, as you exhibit is the proof of an ill-spent youth." And what multitudes of good things, far better things, that young man must have missed in the time he devoted to that one game!

How varied and how mighty are the impulses and tendencies that need control! It is self-control, the ruling spirit, which makes a man greater than the taker of a city. Just as the trainer who enters the lions' cage is ever watchful and, with whip ready for use, often thunders, "Down, Cæsar; back, Nero," so the self-controlled man is ever alert and ready to call halt to his temper, to his ambition, to everything that interferes with his higher nature. Self-control is self-development. Keep in mind Henry Ward Beecher's apt figure, that a man without self-control is like a barrel without hoops, and tumbles to pieces.

A Runaway Engine

The season was over. The big engine, separator, and water tank left for the night in the lot behind the outbuildings made a spectacle so imposing as to draw to their side every boy in the neighborhood. The next morning Jim went out to get up steam to pull the separator into the shed. A fire was soon roaring, and he went back into the house. An hour passed. He did not notice the excited schoolboys, still discussing the machines.

"Here's where he pulls the whistle," said one. "I bet I could start her and guide her, too," said another. "You start her! You couldn't start a wagon down-hill!"

"Couldn't I, though! Here's what he pulls. I've seen him do it many a time." And with both hands the boy grasped the big lever and tugged until he got the throttle open.

Jim was just finishing breakfast when suddenly there was a fearful noise. Crack! Bang! Rip! He rushed to the lot. Before he had covered half the distance to it he saw what had happened. That boys might pull the throttle had never occurred to him; he had built the fire and left the engine with rising steam. When the boy had opened the throttle the big engine had trembled as if uncertain what to do with its free strength; then the wheels began to turn, and the machine, making a

big half circle, had struck the shed, tipped it half over, burst off the big door, and broken in the side of the wall. There Jim found it.

Friends, there is a force in your lives that is strong beyond measuring. That force, if put to the right use in the right way, will prove a blessing to you and to the world. But what are the dread consequences of throwing the throttle wide open and "letting her go"? Wreck and ruin, sorrow and death, will strew the path of the life that is not under the hand of control. And the only safe hand on the lever is the hand of the Master of lives, the Lord Jesus Christ. Will you submit to him?—The Youth's Companion.

The Secret of Self-Control

Paul gives the secret of self-control when he bids one walk by the Spirit. What does it mean to live by the Spirit? Spiritual power is the will of God within us, becoming our will.

Dr. Lyman Abbott gives a fine illustration of this. A little child is sulky and cross, and the mother takes the child up in her lap, and talks with its, and reasons with it. By and by, the pouting lips begin to be drawn into a pleasanter expression, and the child brushes the tears from its eyes, and the frown is smoothed from the brow, and the little child jumps down and runs away, playing. Whose spirit is in the child's—mother's or child's? Both. The mother's spirit is in the child's.

Yet another illustration given by Dr. Abbott is this: The soldiers are fleeing away in a panic and Sheridan meets them, and halts them, and bids them turn the other way, and they gather up their thrown-down muskets and follow after him, and pluck victory out of defeat. Whose spirit makes this possible? Sheridan's? Yes. But Sheridan could not do it unless Sheridan's spirit was in the soldiers. They got his spirit, and it is his spirit in their spirit that wins the victory.

Walking by the Spirit is the effect of living by the Spirit. If the Divine Spirit is in our spirit, if Christ has control of our spirit, then we shall have self-control, and shall live as he would have us live.

Admiral Farragut Learned the Secret of Self-Control

Admiral Farragut shortly before his death gave an account of his early life in these words:

"My father went down in behalf of the United States Government to put an end to Aaron Burr's rebellion. I was a cabin boy, and went along with him. I could swear like an old salt. I could gamble in every style of gambling. I knew all the wickedness there was at that time abroad.

"One day my father cleared everybody out of the cabin except myself, and locked the door. He said: 'David, what are you going to do? What are you going to be?' 'Well,' I said, 'father, I am going to follow the sea.' 'Follow the sea! And be a poor, miserable, drunken sailor, kicked and cuffed about the world, and die of a fever in a foreign hospital?'

"'Oh, no!' I said, 'father, I will not do that; I will tread the quarter-deck and command as you do.' 'No, David,' my father said, 'no, David, a person that has your principles and your bad habits will never tread the quarter-deck or command.'

"My father went out and shut the door after him, and I said then, 'I will change. I will never swear again, I will never drink again, I will never gamble again; and, gentlemen, by the help of God, I have kept those three vows to this time. I soon after that became a Christian, and that decided my fate for time and eternity."

Sentence Sermons

Let the angry person have all the quarrel to himself.

No man resolved to make the most of himself can spare the time for personal contention; still less can he afford to take all the consequences, including the vitiation of his temper and the loss of self-control.—Lincoln.

No man is free who is not master of himself.—Epictetus.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Which one of the disciples do we know best? 2. What did we learn about him in our studies in the Gospel of Matthew? 3. What answer did Jesus give to Peter's question about how many times he should forgive another? 4. How many times did Peter need to be forgiven? 5. What counsel did Jesus give Peter in Gethsemane which, if heeded, would have prevented his denials? (Mt. 26.41.) 6. How did Peter show his weakness? 7. How did he later show his strength as told in Acts 5?

SIMON PETER (From Weakness to Strength)

GOLDEN TEXT: Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. Acts 4.13

LESSON Mark 8.27-29; Luke 22.31-34; John 18.25-27; 21.15-17
DEVOTIONAL READING Philippians 2.1-11

MARK 8.27 And Jesus went forth, and his disciples, into the villages of Cæsarea Philippi: and on the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Who do men say that I am? 28 And they told him, saying, John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but others, One of the prophets. 29 And he asked them, But who say ye that I am? Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.

LUKE 22.31 Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat: 32 but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not; and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, establish thy brethren. 33 And he said unto him, Lord, with thee I am ready to go both to prison and to death. 34 And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, until thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

JOHN 18.25 Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said therefore unto him, Art thou also *one* of his disciples? He denied, and said, I am not. 26 One of the servants of the high priest, being a kinsman of him whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? 27 Peter therefore denied again: and straightway the cock crew.

21.15 So when they had broken their fast, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of John, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16 He saith to him again a second time, Simon, *son* of John, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Tend my sheep. 17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, *son* of John, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. PETER'S GREAT AVOWAL, Mark 8.27-29. "Who do men say that I am?" Jesus suddenly asked his disciples when on their way to Cæsarea Philippi. See The Historical Background. "John the Baptist," they answered—so Herod the tetrarch had said, Mt. 14.2; "and others, Elijah (Mt. 7.10; Mal. 4.5, 6); but others, One of the prophets." "But who say *ye* that I am?" Jesus next questioned. "A photographer makes his sensitive plate, exposes it to just the rays of light that he chooses, dips it into the proper solutions, and holds it up to the light to see if his picture is there. What else did this Great Teacher do on that day but hold up these souls to the light to find out if the reflection of the Son of God were fastened there?" (J. M. Stifler). And Peter answered for all the disciples, "Thou art the Christ."

"This accurate knowledge is obtained not by speculation at a distance nor controversy about him nor wonder while apart from him. Accurate knowledge of him is obtained by living with him. The true view of Christ is reserved for those and given to those most devoted and most susceptible. Life with Christ is the basis of such a revelation of Christ" (William F. McDowell).

II. PETER'S OVER-CONFIDENCE, Luke 22.31-34. Read verses 14-23, and see The Historical Background. "Simon, Simon," Jesus solemnly said, "behold, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat." "The violent motion of the sieve corresponds to the violent trial that the apostle was to experience when Christ was arrested" (Dummelow). And then Jesus assured Peter that he had prayed for him that his faith might not fail. "And do thou, when once thou hast turned again (recovered from thy failure), establish (encourage) thy brethren."

All this sounded utterly incredible to Peter, and with great self-assurance he declared, "Lord with thee I am ready to go both to prison and to death." An ancient writer (Euthymius) says: "He ought rather to have besought Christ, and begged for aid. But he sinned in trusting himself alone, and not in the help of

God. Wherefore also he was permitted to fall, that he might be humbled, and might learn not to trust too much in himself, and that others also might learn the same. Also he was allowed to fall that he might learn to love more. For he to whom more is given, loves more."

Then Jesus sadly foretold Peter's yielding to the temptation awaiting him: before the crowing of the cock, before the dawn of day, Peter would three times deny that he knew his Lord. "I find myself wondering why Jesus fixed upon that cock to be forever associated in Simon Peter's mind with a great crisis in his life. There are those who have seen in the crowing cock something that suggests Peter himself. Every line in the Gospel story makes it apparent that Peter was hasty, he spoke before he thought, he acted before he reflected, and it would almost seem that this ludicrous, crowing, feathered piece of impotence, swelling out its breast with pride as though it were lifting the sun by its call, is a satirical reference to Simon Peter himself, as a boaster who could not make good his high-sounding words" (F. W. Norwood).

Confidence in one's self is a fine thing. Little would be accomplished in this world without it. But over-confidence is far otherwise. Peter thought he was ready to stand by Jesus no matter what happened, even though it might mean imprisonment and death. He was vanquished because he was so sure of himself. He did not watch and pray in the Garden with his Lord. He depended on his own strength.

III. PETER'S SIN, John 18.25-27. After the arrest of Jesus, Peter followed him to the palace of the high priest and was standing in the inner quadrangle before a brazier of coals warming himself, when he was asked if he were not one of Jesus' disciples, and he denied that he was. One of the servants of the high priest, a kinsman of the one whose ear Peter had cut off at the arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mt. 26.51) said to him: "Did I not see thee in the garden with him?" Again Peter denied, and immediately he heard the cock crow. "In that moment Simon Peter was etched into an everlasting picture" (F. W. Norwood).

"Alone and crushed, his enemies close by,
With hasty speech Peter denied his Lord.
Yet safe and careless, with light laughter, I
Denied him with the small, unspoken word" (Ethel A. McNish).

IV. PETER'S PENITENCE AND PARDON, John 21.15-17. On the shore of Galilee (see The Historical Background) Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Simon, son of John (notice that he does not call him Peter, the Rock), lovest thou me more than these (more than these other disciples love me)?" Once Peter had boasted (Mt. 26.33), "If all shall be offended in thee, I will never be offended," but now he is no longer self-confident, and in great humility he answers, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." Instead of "I," it is now "Lord, thou."

"Down beneath the things I do, God is looking also to see the things I am struggling to do. Down beneath the things I accomplish, he is looking to see the masterful passion of my life, and, thank God, the man who has truly committed his life to the Lord God and set the main stream of his life Godwards, can go up before the throne with all his stumbling and mistakes and say, 'Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee'" (Harry E. Fosdick).

Then said Jesus, "Feed my lambs," thus telling the heartbroken Peter that he was trusted, that he would have a chance to redeem himself. A second time Jesus asked the same question, and received the same reply. "Tend my sheep," said Jesus. As many times as Peter had denied him, Jesus asked his question, and Peter well understood that his Master was thus reminding him of his grievous fall. The third time, Peter was grieved and said, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." "Lord, thou knowest everything, all I said and all I did and all I am, but this thou also knowest, that the deepest thing in my heart is my love to thee. By that love which has borne no fruit, which has failed in the hour of need, which has been mastered by fear, but which is real and is my very soul, by that let me be judged" (John Watson).

Peter's emotion was grief, not irritation, nor anger, nor shame. There was no pride, passion, or vanity in this, but only holy, meek contrition, a penitent,

chastened spirit. The man who can so take allusions to his sins is not only fit to tend the sheep, but even to nurse the lambs. He will be tender towards offenders, not with the spurious charity which cannot afford to condemn sin strongly, but with the genuine charity of one who has himself received mercy for sins sincerely repented" (A. B. Bruce).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Simon, son of John, John 21.15. We read of one of the Caliphs who gave his principal officers an honorable surname suggested by their qualities. When he wished to show his dissatisfaction, he dropped it, calling them by their own names; this caused them great alarm. When he resumed the employment of the surname, it was a sign of their return to favor.—Archbishop Trench.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Background of Mark 8.27-29

It was six months before the crucifixion. Jesus and his disciples had been in the Decapolis, east of the Sea of Galilee, and had crossed over to Magdala, on the western shore of the lake, where the Pharisees and Sadducees demanded a sign from him. The multitude, influenced by the Pharisees, began to desert him, and with his disciples he left for the neighborhood of Cæsarea Philippi, between Lake Huleh and Mount Hermon.

The Background of Luke 22.31-34

Jesus spent his last evening with his disciples in the upper room and partook with them of the Passover feast. He talked with them long, and told them of his death in the symbolic offering to them of the broken bread and the cup of wine, which has become for us the sacrament we know as the Lord's supper. Luke gives the prediction of Peter's fall as uttered here in that upper room. Matthew and Mark record it as given on the way to Gethsemane.

The Background of John 18.25-27

From the upper room Jesus and his eleven disciples went to the garden where Jesus endured his terrible agony, and Peter and the other two disciples whom he had asked to watch with him, slept. At the arrest Peter drew his sword and struck off the ear of Malchus, the high priest's servant. "Put up the sword into the sheath," Jesus bade: "the cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

An Oriental Brazier

Peter and another disciple, who may have been John, followed Jesus afar off. The other entered in with Jesus into the court of the high priest. Peter was left standing without, until the other disciple spoke to the maid at the door to allow Peter to enter. "Art thou also one of this man's disciples?" she asked him. "I am not," he replied. His second denial was given as he stood by the fire warming himself.

The Background of John 21.15-17

During the forty days which intervened between his resurrection and ascension, Jesus appeared ten times to his disciples, as recorded in the Gospels and The Acts. The Gospel of John records his appearance to the ten in the absence of Thomas; his appearance to them a week later when Thomas was present and was convinced that he was the Lord;

and the appearance to the disciples after they had been fishing on the Sea of Galilee: read John 21.1-14.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

That is a great story of Napoleon at Marengo. When Kellermann came riding in as the sun was setting defeat was everywhere, and Napoleon said, "How goes the battle?" The marshal said, "It is lost, but there is time to win another," and swung round with his cavalry, and won it.

That is the glory of youth. Failure is a necessary part in every life that is really worth living. The discovery of one's own weakness is a necessary ingredient for true strength. Youth's greatest asset is not in immunity from failure, but in the capacity for recovery. The bitterest liability of later years is that for failure there is little or very difficult recovery. Youth can yet snatch out of the dust of humiliation a torch that will burn more steadily hereafter.—F. W. Norwood.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

HOW CHRIST GIVES STRENGTH

Beginning the Lesson

Peter was a very human disciple, extraordinarily like the ordinary man. His faults and his virtues, his weakness and his strength we all recognize in ourselves. When Jesus said to him, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church," he was far from being a rock. He often asks foolish questions, often blunders, is often heedless, impulsive, hasty and fickle. But he becomes stronger and better with the years, and when we meet him in the history of The Acts we do not wonder that the people marveled at his boldness and took knowledge of him that he had been with Jesus.

We have four incidents in the life of Peter for our lesson today: what is the lesson of each?

A Brief for Peters

The betrayal of Peter was the betrayal of weakness, of exhaustion following the strenuous endeavor to keep close enough to the Master to be of some service to him. He was caught off-guard at two o'clock in the morning, with all his resources paid out and empty. He was caught in the back-wash of that rhythm which is a peculiarity of all human experience. The conduct of Peter at the betrayal is a ground for charity in our thought of the betrayals of hosts of ordinary men, betrayals which come not out of insincerity or meanness or choice, but out of bodies and minds exhausted in an overwhelming combination of evil circumstances of which they for the moment can make nothing. As soon as the tide swings back toward fulness the soul returns to its Lord in genuine repentance. The vast majority of followers of the Christ can be depended upon, even after momentary lapse, to do just what Peter did. There are not many Judases.—Francis J. McConnell, in The Christian Century.

Peter, an Example of Adult Religious Education

Peter is a grown man with adult habits when Jesus calls him. His habits of work, his patterns of thought, and his emotional responses have all previously been established.

The occupation of handling boats, nets, and fish has developed in him habits of physical vigor. How muscularly active he is! We see him jumping into the sea, rushing back to lend his strong arm to the unloading of the boat, ready to construct shacks for the apparitions of Moses and Elijah, whipping out his sword and off with a man's ear before one can stop him, running to the sepulcher as soon as he hears that Jesus' body is not there.

The mental characteristics of the man present themselves with similar clearness. His curiosity is alert. He wants to know everything from the order of apocalyptic events down to purely personal matters of no particular concern to himself. His mind is of a rather prosaic type. He does not readily see the point of parables and figurative speech. Symbolic action likewise is beyond his grasp, as we see in the episode of the feet washing. Peter seems also to misunderstand statements that he is unwilling to accept. Ideas not in harmony with his previously conceived view often seem to him difficult to understand, when the trouble simply is that they are hard to receive. Unwelcome truth is always the unbelievable truth.

The way Peter's mind works gives great evidence of his acquaintanceship with the professional scribes. He knows their debates as to when Elijah shall come and how often a brother may be forgiven. Scribes are seen occupying the chief seats in his house on the occasion of a visit of Jesus (Mark 2.6). They have doubtless been there before. Their influence upon Peter is seen particularly in his keen interest in Messianism. His abandonment of the fish business has other motives than the mere wish of Jesus. The unquestioning promptness with which he gives it up finds its explanation in a dominant interest that has long been growing. It simply leaps into action at Andrew's cry, "Eureka!"

Peter's emotional responses to the primitive impulses of fear, anger, and love are well developed and easily aroused. Time and again we find him to be afraid. He shows his fear, not by cowardice, but by rashness and the compensatory habits of exaggeration and over-emphasis. If we say "I am brave" frequently enough, we may think ourselves very brave, but the fact that we feel the need of such repetition is evidence enough of our fears. So Peter vehemently protests, in effect, "I'll go with you, though I die; I'll stand by you if all the others go." And soon we hear him cursing and swearing, "I don't know him"; "I don't know what you are talking about."

Peter is very talkative. His readiness with words is more an emotional habit than a mental trait. It springs more from a feeling that something should be said than from the intelligent judgment as to the appropriate remarks. On the Mount of Transfiguration, where thoughtfulness would certainly advise silence and worship, Peter babbles nonsense, and the explanation is "for he was afraid." So strong is this habit of calming his fears by a verbal solution of his anxieties that, on one fatal night, having reiterated with the strongest possible affirmations his determination to stand by his Master even in the face of death, he easily falls asleep in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Now this is the human material with which Jesus has to deal. What Jesus does with it is the outstanding illustration of the "supreme pedagogy," to use G. Stanley Hall's expression. It is full of suggestiveness for all adult reëducation. Three clearly defined principles appear:

1. Jesus utilizes the valuable working habits already formed. What is more penetrating than his remarks to the successful fishermen, "I will make you to become fishers of men"? No change of habit is contemplated, solely a change of objective.

2. In regard to Peter's mental traits, Jesus must break up an inadequate stereotype of thought and reorient its ideas. This is always the major task in adult education. Peter's curiosity can be redirected to worthier objects. Even his prosiness can be capitalized for practical purposes.

But Peter has a complex. A complex is defined as a "system of connected ideas with a strong emotional tone tending to produce a certain definite character." Peter has one. It is a typical product of the scribes' teachings. He holds their Messianic views. He is orthodox in his version of the apocalyptic program, which depends on signs and portents rather than on spiritual conditions. He is one-hundred-per-cent loyal to the doctrine of a triumphant Davidic king. He does not hold these views lightly, nor will he modify them gladly. They stir him to the depths.

One of the most remarkable contrasts in the Gospel story is Peter's being convinced that Jesus is the Messiah and at the same time equally convinced that Jesus' ideas are wrong and his methods doomed to failure. How foolish it seems for Jesus to retire when all men are seeking him! How very rash to speak so harshly of the rich and influential, the very men who can help him to his kingdom! And when Jesus mentions a dying Messiah, Peter is so disturbed he cannot even utter his natural, "Not so, Lord," but takes him aside to "labor with" and convince him of his error.

3. But how can Jesus ever convince Peter? By argument? Never. He does not try it. To break this stereotype in Peter's mind it is necessary to reach its emotional root. And this is Jesus' master achievement with Peter. In it we see a third principle of Jesus' method, the redirection of emotional interest.

Jesus does not suppress Peter's exuberance. The trouble with most adults is not that they have too much emotion but too little. Peter is exceptional. But as surcharged as Peter already is, Jesus always selects him to go where his emotional depths are likely to be stirred even more. He takes him to the deathbed of the daughter of Jairus, to the Mount of Transfiguration, and to witness his agonized praying in Gethsemane. What the kingdom will always need is dynamic personalities. And Jesus does nothing to lessen the driving force of Peter's emotional interest. What he

does with it is to wean it away from a false image of the Messiah and to attach it to himself.

When the short term of instruction draws to a close, the Master announces an examination ahead. It is to be very searching, an examination like the sifting of wheat in the hands of a rival grower. It will be conducted by Satan, the trier of men's souls. His role, however, is now played by a little maid. But even so, the test is too severe for Peter. He fails. His devotion to the Messiah of fact and not the Messiah of theory suffers an eclipse. He has not yet learned the lesson of the cross.

But Peter is not dropped from the school of Christ; a strong man weeping over his failure never is. A second examination is given. There is but one question. Three times it is repeated to make sure that the prosaic-minded pupil understands. With Peter's final answer Jesus is satisfied. An important psychological fact appears. The organized habit responses of a lifetime are released and redirected under an extreme emotion. Peter is led away from a sterile apocalyptic interest with its stereotyped ethical judgments and in its place is found a passionate devotion to Jesus, which in all ages is to be the dynamic of Christianity.

The soul-probing test is over, but the old curiosity is not gone. Peter immediately asks a meddlesome question as to the fate of John. A doubt slips into our minds. Has Jesus succeeded with Peter after all? Oh, largely, yes! Pentecost and after tells the tale. But as there still must follow the Joppa vision and Paul's rebuke, we realize that there is something more important than adult education; we remember that it was of a child Jesus said, "To such belongeth the kingdom of God."—Wilbur V. Mallalieu, in The Church School Journal.

They Took Knowledge of Peter that He Had Been with Jesus

And this is the disciple who had been surnamed "The Rock"! Our Lord looked into the morrow, and he saw Simon's character, compacted by grace and discipline into a texture tough and firm as granite. But there is not much granite here! Peter is yet loose and yielding; more like a bending reed than an unshakable rock. A servant girl whispers, and his timid heart flings a lie to his lips and he denies his Lord.

Peter denied the Master, not because he coveted money, but because he feared men. He was not seeking crowns, but escaping frowns. He was not clutching at a garland, but avoiding a sword. It was not avarice but cowardice which determined his ways. He shrank from crucifixion! He saw a possible cross, and with a great lie he passed by on the other side.

But the Lord has not done with Peter. He is still "in the making." Some day he will justify his new name. Some day we shall find it written: "When they saw the boldness of Peter, they marvelled"! Once a maid could make him tremble. Now he can stand in high places, "steadfast and unmovable"!

Here is a marvellous transformation! I have been wondering at the littleness of the denier, and now this same denier is making the world wonder by his majestic boldness! His one resource is now the risen Christ, and his one moral standard is "whether it be right"! Once he quailed before an accusing maid; now he stands undaunted before the rulers of the earth. How has it all come about?

He has been to the empty tomb. The awe of the resurrection is upon his spirit. Through the once blind cul-de-sac of the grave he has seen the King and the great white throne.

And he has been by the lake on the morning of reconciliation. The live coal from the altar of his Lord's love has touched him and has purged away the uncleanness of his denial.

And he has been in the upper room at Pentecost, and the mighty Spirit has come upon him like wind and flame endowing him with forceful and enthusiastic character. Now he can dare for God, now he can work for God, now he can burn for God! And this is how he has been transformed—Condensed from My Daily Meditation, by J. H. Jowett.

At the End

He was crucified head-downward
Because he deemed himself unworthy
To die the death of Jesus.
Denial, cock-crow, crucifixion—
His was a sacred way
That only the strong dare follow.—Earl B. Marlatt.

It Is Attitude that Counts

If the trend of a life is upward, toward the hilltop, then that life is a success. There may be many a fall along the way, but if the character of the life as a whole is onward and upward, the life is not failing. J. D. Jones of England in an address illustrated the thought that one's moral character is determined by the general tenor of his life and not by occasional deviations in the direction either of good or of evil, by an explanation of the difference between weather and climate. Climate is the settled, permanent thing; weather is merely an occasional thing. Sometimes dwellers in the tropics get a touch of the arctics and sometimes those in temperate regions have a touch of the tropics. A man's fundamental and essential character is his climate. The fact that a man does good or bad deeds does not alter the fact that his fundamental character is biased either for good or for evil. Varieties of weather, but one climate; varieties of deed, but one abiding and settled character.

"The lily is not less fair or fragrant because its roots are in the mud," writes Hamilton Wright Mabie; its saintly purity is the whiter because of the transformation which it has wrought in the elements of its life. A human character, full of inspiration, drawn upward by all the impulses of its nature when they are brought into harmony and educated into strength, is not less noble because of the hours of weakness through which it has passed. If God's promises are true, the stains which it feels, and which others perhaps remember, are no longer visible to One who sees all things as they are. The sure defence against the temptation to be weakened by the memory of past sins is to look ahead; to feel that one's true life lies always in advance, and never behind; that out of weakness true penitence brings strength, and out of sorrow there may be found a crown of joy."

Keep Wrestling

I knew a student who had been to Keswick and had drunk deep of the teaching of that school, and very noble teaching it is when nobly grasped. And he came back to Scotland in a kind of rapture; everything was to be easy ever more. He went to one of our most saintly ministers to tell him about this new-found way to holiness and the minister (with his beautiful smile) looked at him and said, "Oh, sir, it will be a sore *wrastle* till the end."—G. H. Morrison.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The character of Peter. See Chapter V of Representative Men of the New Testament by George Matheson; Chapter VII of Meeting the Masters, by Ozora S. Davis; Chapters XII, XXXVII and LI of The Master's Questions to His Disciples, by G. H. Knight; Lecture III of In the School of Christ, by William F. McDowell.

2. Moral cowardice. There is in this community today an amount of right conviction which, if it were set free into right action by complete release from moral cowardice, would be felt through the land.—Phillips Brooks.

3. Divine judgment is based on the tendency of a life, not on separate successes or failures.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What sort of life would this be if all our apprehensions were fixed to the limits of our senses? 2. What is the difference between an agnostic and a skeptic? 3. How did Thomas show himself pessimistic? 4. What more than credence is there in belief? 5. Is it a sin to doubt? 6. Is it a sin to be willing to doubt? 7. How is doubt of value? 8. What should be done with doubts? 9. What should not be done with doubts?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

HOW A WEAK MAN BECAME STRONG

Beginning the Lesson

In our lessons from the Gospel of Matthew during the first six months of this year, what glimpses did we have of Peter? What does our first selection today, from the Gospel of Mark, tell us that he had learned about his Master? What warning did Jesus give Peter, as recorded in our second selection? When before had Peter shown his self-confidence? How did Peter fail Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane? How, at the trial of Jesus?

"At cockcrow, all those later years,
How Peter must have flinched,
The cold sweat starting on his brow,
His knotted fingers clinched.

"What pictures rose before his eyes!
(*If time could make them dim!*)
That inner court, the brazier fire,
Two maids confronting him;

"Their searching gaze, their skeptic look,
That question from them both,
From standers-by—and then his three
Denials with an oath." (Bertha Gerneaux Woods)

What excuses could be made for him then? How could he have kept himself loyal to Jesus? Tell the story of his forgiveness. What does our Golden Text say? What were the circumstances? What explanation of the change in Peter does our Golden Text give?

Peter's Weakness

Have you noticed in the reports of those drowned at summer resorts that most of them have been good swimmers? Their over-confidence in their ability to swim made them take risks which poor swimmers would not think of taking. Skill in swimming is good, but the skilful swimmer is prone to overestimate his strength or endurance. Over-confidence was Peter's great failing. We see this over-confidence in himself when he started to walk across the water to Jesus, and then, becoming fearful, cried out, "Lord, save me." We see it when Jesus warned him that he would be tempted to fall, and he asserted, "Lord, with thee I am ready to go both to prison and to death." We see it when after the arrest of Jesus he followed "afar off," thinking he was brave enough to go into temptation.

In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus bade Peter watch and pray that he might not enter into temptation, but Peter neither watched nor prayed, and by the fire in Pilate's courtyard his courage, which he had thought all-sufficient, quailed and gave way; and he denied his Lord. He had been confident in his own power, but he sorely needed God's power.

A boy in a mission school was greatly discouraged because of what he called his "stumbles down." But when he learned how to rely on God's help, he said joyfully, "I think I'm up for always now." The confidence that Christ could keep him from stumbling was very different from confidence in his own ability never to go wrong.

Why even the Strong Need Support lest they Fall

A few days ago I spent some time in my garden tying up some of the growing plants. You may say, why did I tie up those which had strong stems, such as standard rose trees, hollyhocks, dahlias, etc., which seem quite able to stand alone? The answer is, because probably some day a strong wind will blow, and I know they would be unable to stand against it, and would therefore be blown down; or, as they grow bigger, their own weight might become great enough to make them fall over, and even to bring them down to the ground. And so I put strong stakes in the ground beside them, and tied them to the stakes, so that they would be supported, and kept from falling.

Similarly, we all need support in life. We cannot stand alone. Some of you, especially those who are younger, perhaps, even some boys and girls, may think that they can. You may say: "I am strong, I know how I ought to act and live, and I am going to do it in my own strength." Ah, but there are times of temptation and testing ahead in your lives; times when the winds of temptation will blow so fiercely that if you have no support to which you can cling, and on whose strength you can rely, you will fall and be unable to rise. You cannot meet and resist these temptations and testings in your own strength alone. And that is why your parents and teachers and friends try to lead you to the Lord Jesus, so that you may cling to him and have him as your unfailing support, because he "is able to keep you from falling" (Jude 24). —W. S. Herbert Wylie, in Nature Studies.

Dependable Strength

Out in one of the great buildings at the San Francisco Exposition, among a great many other things there was an exhibition of steel rails and steel beams of all kinds.

There were the great rails, such as are used in the heaviest railroads; rails made so big and strong that huge engines and long trains can go pounding over them at their tremendous speed, and be sure that the rails will hold them up. Now, one of these rails had a sign on it, which told what the particular breaking strength of that rail was. The breaking strength of a rail means the number of pounds, thousands and thousands of pounds, which the rail will bear before it will break.

You can see how important it is to know truly the breaking strength of a rail, or of a steel beam, before you use it. The man who lays the tracks of the railroad has to be quite sure, beyond any possible doubt, that he can count on his rails to hold up the heavy trains, or else there would be a wreck. So, in the same way, the engineer who builds a great bridge across a river figures up how much weight his bridge will have to carry, when people and street-cars and wagons are passing over it all day. And he must be quite sure that the steel he is going to use will really carry all the weight which it is supposed to carry. It must be reliable steel, or else one day his bridge will collapse.

Doesn't all this help us to think of what ought to be true of you and me? We must have our dependable strength, too, which people can rely on. We must want it to be true of us that people can be sure that we will stand strong, not just when it is easy to stand, but when there is a great deal of pressure upon us to make us give way and bend and break.

It is our business to make ourselves so strong that we will not give way, even when other people want us to, and when the pressure is very great. We must ask God to make us like the reliable steel which stands sure, no matter what the strain.—Walter Russell Bowie, in The Children's Year.

I Can Do All Things through Christ who Strengtheneth me

At an agricultural school in one of our Eastern States one of the professors recently made some interesting experiments with a growing squash. He fitted a harness of strap iron over the squash in such a way that, as the vegetable grew, the expanding iron harness would register the strength that the squash exerted upon it. Thus harnessed the young squash lifted at different stages of its growth weights of sixty, five hundred, eleven hundred, and eventually of three thousand pounds. And all this marvelous power was made possible through just one thing—the connection of the squash with the vine.

One of the most amazing things in life is the power for burden-bearing that apparently weak and almost helpless men and women often manifest. In every path of life we find them, staggering on their way under heavy loads of business trouble, sickness, physical pain and misfortune. We marvel that they do not go down beneath their loads. Instead they accept them with patience and cheerfulness; day after day they fare courageously onward.

There is an explanation. If the secret of the inner life of these people could be known, the explanation of their strength would be found in just one thing—connection with the Vine. They are in constant contact with him who said, "I am the true vine." "I can do all things," wrote the great apostle, "through Christ who strengtheneth me."—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons

If Christ the Lord should come today,
As erst to Peter by the sea,
And low and tenderly should say
"O my disciple, lovest thou me?"
To thee and me—
What would our answer be?—Margaret E. Sangster.

"In the hour of trial,
Jesus, pray for me,
Lest by base denial
I depart from thee."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Why did not Thomas believe the report of the other disciples about the resurrection of Jesus? 2. Of what other honest doubter in regard to Jesus have we heard in our lessons this year? 3. What is your estimation of Thomas? 4. What do you think a writer meant when he referred to "The Order of St. Thomas"? 5. Certain words of Jesus have been called "The Beatitude unto All Generations": what are they?

THOMAS (The Honest Doubter)

GOLDEN TEXT: Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. John 20.28

LESSON John 11.14-16; 14.5-8; 20.24-29; 21.1, 2
DEVOTIONAL READING Proverbs 3.13-20

JOHN 11.14 Then Jesus therefore said unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. 15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him. 16 Thomas therefore, who is called Didymus, said unto his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

14.5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way? 6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me. 7 If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. 8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

20.24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.

26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you. 27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach *hither* thy hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. 28 Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. 29 Jesus saith unto him, Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed.

21.1 After these things Jesus manifested himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and he manifested *himself* on this wise. 2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the *sons* of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THOMAS THE PESSIMIST, John 11.14-16. Read John 11.1-13. When Jesus told the disciples that Lazarus was fallen asleep, they took his words literally, and he had to tell them plainly that Lazarus was dead. And then Jesus added words that at first sight seemed strange: "And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe." When he had first heard of the sickness of Lazarus, he said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby." It was for Jesus a great opportunity to render service and inspire faith.

"The darker our night, the more radiant his coming. When our sorrow seems greater than it need have been, and to be without meaning to us, let us wait until we see what he means by it and what he means to do for us through it" (Robert E. Speer).

"Let us go unto him," thus Jesus announced his intention of going to Bethany. Thomas who is called Didymus (*Didymus* means *twin*) was certain that death would be the fate of Jesus if he were seen at Bethany, but loyally he said to the other disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

II. THOMAS THE PRACTICAL, 14.5-8. Read John 14.1-4. In his last discourse with his disciples Jesus told them that he was going to prepare a place for them in his Father's house. When he said, "And whither I go, ye know the way," Thomas voiced his failure to understand the words: "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way?" Thomas was still expecting Jesus to establish an earthly kingdom, and this obsession prevented his mind from grasping the meaning of his Master's words. "I am the way, the truth, and the life," Jesus answered. "The Kingdom which I have come to reveal is not an earthly one; the mansions of which I have spoken are in heaven, not on earth. To share in my Kingdom is to share that state of exalted and blissful communion with the Father, which is not possible on earth. I depart to heaven, to enter into that state of bliss; and you may follow and enjoy it, too, if you will have faith in me as the one Mediator between God and man (the Way), the one Teacher authorized to reveal the things

of God (the Truth), and the one Author of spiritual as of natural life (the Life)." "Without the way there is no going; without the truth there is no knowing; without the life there is no living: I am the Way which thou shouldest pursue; the Truth which thou shouldest believe; the Life which thou shouldest hope for" (Thomas a Kempis).

"Heaven often seems distant and unknown, but if he who made the road thither is our Guide, we need not fear to lose the way. We do not want to see far ahead—only far enough to discern him and trace his footsteps" (Henry van Dyke).

"No one cometh unto the Father, but by me," Jesus continued. Whatever knowledge or skill or lack thereof men may have, however good or evil their dispositions, all are equal as regards their common need of the Savior to lead them to God. We sometimes say that all roads lead to Rome, that is, that one can attain his goal by various ways. But to the highest goal, the Father, only one path leads—Jesus.

"If ye had known me (had really apprehended me, grasped my divinity), ye would have known my father also; from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him (have seen his character which is revealed in me).

"Is there a God? How can I be sure that he is? What does he feel toward us? These are questions which men persistently ask, and wait for the reply, but the Master gave the only satisfactory answer that has ever been uttered in the hearing of mankind, when he said in effect, 'The knowledge of God must be conveyed, not in words or books, in symbols or types, but in a life. To know me, to believe in me, to come into contact with me, is to know the deepest heart of God.'" (F. B. Meyer).

Philip then interrupted. He wanted sight, not faith. "Lord, show us the Father," he said, "and it sufficeth us." His words voice the longing of the world's heart in every age for such a revelation of the Father as would banish all fear and inspire perfect trust. Deeply grieved at Philip's words, Jesus replied, "Have I been so long with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip?" Philip had companied three years with his Master, and had failed to recognize in him the Revelation of the Father.

"People that live close to something which men come from the ends of the earth to see, have often never seen it. A man may have lived all his life within sound of Niagara, and perhaps never have gone to look at the rush of the waters. Is that what you do with Jesus Christ? Are you so accustomed to hear about him that you do not know him? Have you so long heard of him that you never come to see him?" (Alexander Maclaren).

III. THOMAS THE DOUBTER, 20.24, 25. Read the account of his appearance in the evening to his disciples, John 20.19-23. Thomas was not among them at that time; he was the only one of the eleven disciples to whom that first Easter was not Easter. He would not credit their report that they had seen the Lord. Thomas stoutly maintained that nothing less than the evidence of his own senses—the putting of his finger into the print of the nails and his hand into his wounded side—would convince him of so stupendous a miracle as the resurrection of his Lord.

"I have seen others in the same plight as Thomas—unable to believe, unable to realize, that Jesus is alive. I have received letters such as Thomas might have written on any one of the ten days after the Passover. 'I can see no gleam of light, and have lost my hold on God,' writes one out of the mists of a crushing grief. And that was exactly the case with Thomas" (J. D. Jones).

IV. THOMAS CONVINCED, 20.26-29. On the following Sunday Thomas was with the disciples in the same upper room in Jerusalem, and as before, the doors were shut. Again Jesus appeared, and after the customary greeting, "Peace be unto you," he turned to Thomas and said: "Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. The Greek word translated *faithless,* is literally *without faith.* Dr. Moffatt translates the sentence admirably: Cease your unbelief, and believe. Jesus did not chide Thomas for his doubt, he did not think his doubt inexcusable. He offered him the sign, or proof, that he asked.

Evidently Thomas felt there was no need of doing as Jesus bade. The face of Jesus was enough for him, and he exclaimed, "My Lord and my God." It was

sight which led him to believe the risen Jesus was the Jesus who had lived with them, but it was soul which led him to believe that the risen Jesus is divine. The Jesus whom he had loved was now the Christ whom he worshiped.

"Believing is not credence only, but trust. The object of the Christian's faith is not a proposition; it is not a dogma or a truth, but a Person. And the act of faith is not an acceptance of a certain thing—a resurrection or anything else—as true, but it is a reaching out of the whole nature to him and the resting upon him" (Alexander Maclaren).

"Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed," then said Jesus. Have you never envied those disciples who saw Jesus, lived with him, heard his voice, knew him as one knows his brother? How easy it must have been for them to believe in him, we think. Yet Jesus himself added, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Jesus did not object to Thomas' desire to prove his Lord's identity beyond all possibility of mistake, nor did he wish Thomas to understand that one who believes on slender grounds is more blessed than one who believes on convincing evidence. What he did mean was that he who has not seen and yet has believed rests his faith on higher evidence than does he who believes because he has seen. The beloved disciple looked into the empty tomb and believed Christ's resurrection. He needed not other evidence, for a knowledge of his Master's life and his experience of his Master's power made the resurrection easily believable. John was convinced by the evidence of his soul. Thomas required first the evidence of his senses.

"To believe, not because we are learned and can prove, but because there is a something in us, even God's own Spirit, which makes us feel Light as light, and Truth as true—that is the blessed faith."

V. ANOTHER PROOF GIVEN THOMAS, John 21.1, 2. Peter, Nathanael, James and John, Thomas, and two other disciples, were back in Galilee, in the old haunts. By the Sea of Galilee Jesus manifested himself to them; this was the occasion of which we learned in our lesson last week, when Jesus forgave Peter.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

I am the way, John 14.6. The highest reason is at once stimulated and satisfied when the divine Teacher likens himself unto the sun, the vine, the life, the truth. But since no object is more homely than the road over which pass the weary multitudes, with herds and flocks, and caravans, it stirs our sense of wonder that Christ should have likened himself unto the way that leads into some imperial city. Yet the events of that far-off Roman era lent to the road a world-wide significance, and made "the way" one of the richest of Christ's symbols. At best it was a rude, wild age. Society was chaotic and unorganized. For reasons of safety men dwelt in walled towns and cities. There were brigands in the mountains and wolves in the hills. When the night fell the keepers hurried their flocks toward the gates of the villages, and the caravans made haste to find safety within the walls of some town. In such an age Julius Cæsar conceived the idea of binding all the provinces together by a system of roads. And with these ways and roads uniting the towns and cities, leveling the valleys and making the mountains low, peace followed tumult and danger gave way to security. Soon the road came to stand for security, peace and permanency. By reason of the associations with law, government, justice, it may be doubted whether any other term could have carried more meaning to men than the expression, "I am the Way."—Newell Dwight Hillis.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Two, at least, of the men who had companied with Jesus for a long time were troubled with doubts. What Jesus said about his going away, about the mansions in his Father's house, and about their knowing the way thither, filled them with perplexity. He had endeavored to prepare them for this parting, had plainly told them that he was to lay down his life for the sins of the world, and that he should rise again, but they had not grasped his meaning. At Cæsarea Philippi they had declared their Master to be the Christ, the Son of the living God; but their faith was ofttimes beclouded.

Yet Jesus was not indignant at their slowness of understanding and their lack of faith. And he did not try to convince them by arguments. He patiently bade them

continue in loving obedience to his words, and told them that the Holy Spirit would teach the truth to all who would receive him.

Some of you have pupils who are troubled by doubts. Arguments may not help them, but the method of the Master will.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE VALUE AND PERIL OF DOUBT

Beginning the Lesson

With some people their emotions, feelings, are uppermost; they are governed by them rather than by their minds. Faith, even credulity, is easy for them. They have no doubts about the reality and the divinity of Jesus Christ, about his resurrection and his living presence with them. They are the happiest people, for they have no tormenting doubts.

There are others whose reflective powers are stronger than their emotional. They must think things out, reason them out, prove all things, and for them faith comes only after long and anxious meditation. Such a man was Thomas.

Is there value in doubt? Is there peril? What is the value of a doubt? What is the peril?

The Value of Doubt

According to one of our leading writers, the highway of earnest belief is earnest doubting. "A question mark is simply evidence that a man is beginning to think. Take the doubts which education has given you, and face them. Seek to resolve them. The only skepticism that the pulpit has a right to condemn is the skepticism of Pilate, who says, with a shrug of his shoulders, 'What is truth?' and goes out without waiting for an answer. . . . We ought to be more devout because of Robert Ingersoll. Not because he is an educator in devotion, but because the shaken faith should be stronger than the unshaken, and we should have our roots so laying hold of God Almighty that blasts of tempestuous doubt shall only make them take a stronger hold." "Bygone doubts are available for the furtherance of faith," says another writer; "for the perturbations of faith are converted into confirmations, just as the perturbations in the planetary motions, at first supposed to throw doubt on Newton's theory of gravitation, were converted by more searching inquiry into the strongest proof of its truth."

Certainly the faith of the world has been strengthened by the doubt of Thomas; his very character gives great force to his satisfied doubt and final testimony. Peter was impulsive and quick to jump at conclusions; John was ruled by his love. Thomas was brave and honest and earnest, and at the same time cautious, suspicious, and despondent. He had lost all hope. If such a man can be convinced, any one can be. Thomas was resolved that he would trust to no one's testimony. Truthful as he knew the other apostles and the women were, he would believe only when he himself saw and felt and heard. The others might have had a dream or seen a vision, or some one might have been impersonating his Master, he doubtless thought; only one proof should be conclusive to him, and that his own.

"It was by the tedious, twisting path of doubt," S. D. Gordon acknowledges, "that I climbed the hill of truth up to some of its summits of certainty."

The Peril of Doubt

Doubt indulged soon becomes doubt realized.—Frances R. Havergal.

The Embryo Faith of Many a Skeptic

One day in Paris a religious procession headed by a man carrying a crucifix passed Voltaire. To the astonishment of the friend who was with him, Voltaire raised his hat. "What!" exclaimed his friend, "do you believe in God?" The skeptic's ironic reply was, "We salute, but we do not speak."

The salute of the arch-skeptic of the eighteenth century is, to say the least, significant. Beneath all the bitter words and the ironic wrath, there was some final reverence—a vestige possibly from early training—a deeper thing than even his unbelief.

A salute may seem little enough—not much more possibly than a grudging acknowledgment of religion and of God—yet in a Voltaire it is certainly arresting. And he is but an outstanding example of the more or less embryo faith of many a skeptic.

Unbelievers, so called, often make their salutes, each in his own way. Most deniers have attitudes or estimates that point away from denial.

For behind the salute there may be a wistful and unsatisfied heart. Dr. Douglas Adam has told of a friend of his who was acting on a royal commission of which Huxley was also a member. One Sunday they were staying together in a little country town. "I suppose you are going to church," said Huxley to his fellow commissioner. "Yes," he said. "What if, instead, you stayed at home and talked to me of religion?" "No," he replied, "I am not clever enough to refute your arguments." "But what if you simply told me your own experience, what religion has done for you?" He agreed. Instead of going to church he told Huxley the story of what Christ had been to him, and presently there were tears in the eyes of the great agnostic as he said, "I would give my right hand if I could believe that."

That a man salutes but does not speak to God may be due to a number of causes, not the least of which is misunderstanding.—Condensed from an Article in The Christian Century, by F. C. Hoggarth.

What to Do with Doubts

Man is finite and God infinite; and finite man must be content not to understand Infinite God. Intellectual difficulties there always will be in the way of understanding many religious truths; difficulties that are insoluble. All our doubts do not need to be resolved.

Some doubts there are which need not trouble one because they will resolve themselves. "If I could only believe what you believe, I should very soon be a better man," some one said to Pascal, and the latter wisely replied, "Begin by being a better man, and you will very soon believe what I believe." Put the doubts out of mind and live as though they did not exist for you. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" was Christ's command; whoever honestly and earnestly obeys, will find that his doubts trouble him no more. You cannot know Christ's life without learning that he is worthy of confidence; and you cannot put your trust in him and serve him without learning that he is your Lord and your God.

Some doubts there are which trouble one in the earlier part of his Christian career and disappear as he grows in spiritual power and insight. To such doubts the counsel of Horace Bushnell aptly applies: "Often the very best thing you can do with your doubts is to hang them up to dry. Then, when a good time comes, you can take them down to look at. In many cases you will find that somehow they have settled themselves; they are no longer doubts." Practise and experience of religious truths must precede theorizing about religious truths.

Do not make the mistake of confounding doubt in regard to doctrine with doubt in regard to religious truth. Do not confound doubt with unbelief. Doubt is an unsettled thing; unbelief is a settled thing. Doubt cherished and cultivated may lead to unbelief.

If one's own light disappears utterly in the fog of doubt, it is a good thing to steer by others' lights. A forceful writer has said that for a time he doubted everything except that there is a God, and then he steered his life as the steamers steer their way in the New York harbor during a fog, not by any light of his own, but by bells and signals he heard from other lives.

A young theological student was beset with doubts, one long-cherished conviction after another disappeared, and illness followed his severe mental struggle. He went into the country to regain his health, taking with him a trunkful of books which he intended to study in the hope that he might regain his hold on the spiritual verities. There was a forlorn little church in the neighborhood without a pastor. He was asked to teach a class in the Sunday school and could not refuse. Then the people besought him to preach for them. What could he preach, he who had so many doubts, and yet how could he refuse? He yielded to their importunities, and soon found himself thinking, "If the Gospel is not true, it ought to be true, for it is what all need." The boys needed his guiding hand, the aged looked forward to his calls, the sick required his ministrations, and the bereaved his words of comfort and hope. He forgot himself and his doubts. He labored earnestly for the little community, and when he left in the fall his books had not been opened, but his doubts had disappeared, and he could say with Paul: "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

What Not to Do with Doubts

An old Italian writer says that when the plague attacked a family or clan of the Sicilians their custom was to load a mule with the infected garments of the dead, and drive it into the territory of a neighboring tribe. "Why should we bear trouble alone?" was said to be their sole apology for the inhuman act. The Italian historian may have slandered the Sicilians, against whom he evidently had a grudge; but there are English speaking people who are as cruel.

A venerable physician—a man who gave a long life to devoted Christian service—once told a friend that when a young man he was troubled with religious skepticism. He talked much about his doubts to his room-mate at college, who at last fully accepted the belief that Christianity was a mistake, and that in the French school of atheism was the key to truth.

After leaving college the two friends lost sight of each other, and did not meet again until they were both in middle life. The physician had returned to his allegiance to Christ, but he found that his classmate had clung to his unbelief, had lost all hold on faith, honesty and even decency, and had hardly a single friend.

"It was you who helped to make me what I am," he said to the good doctor; "you filled my mind with doubts, until I became assured that Christianity was a fable, and there was no God."

There is today much discussion of infidel doctrines by lads at college, and by young men in business occupations. The earnest seeker for truth shows his good sense when he thoughtfully considers these doctrines with men wiser than himself.

But unfortunately the young skeptic, as a rule, fancies that his doubts prove that he has a stronger and more acute intellect than his friends who maintain their religious belief, and he makes haste to parade before companions his shallow arguments. If his companions are weaker than himself he succeeds in taking from them their God, and the faith and hope which make life tolerable.

Wherein does he differ from the Sicilian who, it is said, distributed death among his friends?—The Youth's Companion.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The Doubt of Thomas. See pages 506-514 of The Training of the Twelve, by A. B. Bruce.

2. What is doubt? Robust disbelief is one thing; but incessant quibbling, analyzing, subtilizing, playing dilettante, skeptic, and sophist, is quite another.—Henry Churchill King.

3. The sin is not in the doubting, but in the willingness to remain in doubt.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What was a centurion? 2. What additional information about the centurion is given in Luke 7? 3. What is the force of the centurion's reference to himself in verse nine? 4. Why was the centurion's faith so remarkable? 5. To what current belief did Jesus allude in verse eleven? 6. What did Jesus mean by the last clause of verse twelve? 7. Mention men of races other than the Hebrew who are commended in the Bible. 8. Have you any racial prejudices? 9. How were they acquired? 10. What should you do about them?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

LEARNING TO TRUST JESUS

Beginning the Lesson

In our lesson the first Sunday in March, our text recorded the time when John the Baptist was in doubt about Jesus: what did he do? What answer did Jesus make to John's messengers? What was Jesus' attitude toward John the Baptist and who was an honest doubter? Today we hear about another honest doubter: who was he? About what did he doubt? How did Jesus overcome his doubt? What characteristic did Thomas show in our text from the eleventh chapter of John? In our text from the fourteenth chapter?

How College Students Learned to Trust Jesus

Will Rogers had been a bright student in college, and was teaching a year or two to get money with which to go abroad and take his Ph. D. There were in the college about a dozen young men, largely sophomores, who gathered together to discuss the

"emancipation of the human mind from the dogmas of past ages," and to glory in their own intellectual greatness. To these young men it seemed a strange thing that Tutor Rogers should be the brilliant scholar he was, the well-read man in all modern sciences, and yet a sincere and outspoken Christian.

One day they asked him about it, and suggested that he might be interested in attending a meeting of their club. He promptly accepted the invitation, and they proceeded with unwonted vigor in their ready denials of faith in God, Christ and the Bible. "Fellows," said Rogers, at length, "if you are determined not to believe these things, why don't you get the best arguments there are? Those you advance are the cheap oratorical quibbles of the lecture platform. There are much better arguments against the Bible than you have advanced. Hold on, and I'll give you some." Then they listened in amazement as he quoted from ancient writers, beginning with Celsus and Porphyry; from philosophers, such as Schopenhauer, whose names they hardly knew; from scientists, Huxley and Tyndall. He towed them into the deep waters of thought, and plunged them into whirlpools of doubt deeper than they had known; and then he said "Good night!" and offered to come again.

Thorwaldsen's Statue of Thomas

The club sat silent for five minutes after he had gone. Then one asked, "Can Tute Rogers know all this and still be a Christian? What arguments do you suppose he knows on the other side?" The next day they waited on him again, and asked, "Will you come again, and tell us the answers to those arguments?" "Certainly," said Rogers, "if you wish me to do so."

It was a quiet and thoughtful group of young men with whom he met next time, and Rogers began with a few earnest words on the need of open and honest minds to discern the truth. Then he told them the reasons for his faith. It would make a long story if the whole were told, but the sum of it is this: the club continued its organization, but with a new spirit and purpose, and with Tutor Rogers as its leader. Before the year ended the membership had considerably increased, and the original members, instead of shallow and argumentative skeptics, had become earnest Christians.—The Youth's Companion.

How Lew Wallace Learned to Trust Jesus

Before and for some time after the Civil War, Gen. Lew Wallace was inclined to be skeptical in religious matters, and particularly concerning the divinity of Christ. One day while traveling on the railroad he chanced to meet Col. Ingersoll, the infidel. Their conversation turned on religious topics, and in the course of the discussion Ingersoll presented his views. Wallace listened and was much impressed, but finally remarked that he was not prepared to agree with Ingersoll on certain very extreme propositions relative to the non-divinity of Christ. Ingersoll urged Wallace to give the matter the careful study and research which he himself had given to it, expressing his confidence that Wallace would, after so doing, fully acquiesce in Ingersoll's views. After parting, Wallace turned the matter over in his mind, and determined to give it the most thorough investigation. For six years he thought, studied and searched. At the end of that time "Ben Hur" was produced. I met Wallace at a hotel in Indianapolis not long after. The book was naturally the topic of our conversation. After having told me the story I have just given, Wallace turned to me and said: "The result of my long study was the absolute conviction that Jesus of Nazareth was not only a Christ, and the Christ, but he was also my Christ, my Savior, and my Redeemer. That fact once settled in my own mind, I wrote 'Ben Hur.'"—Told by a Friend of General Wallace.

The One Thing Necessary

A great steamer was within an hour of its goal in New Zealand when it ran into a dense fog. Nothing was visible but a narrow circle of sea. The vessel crept along for a few moments and then stopped. Then after a pause, it crept cautiously forward again, like a man groping his way in the dark. All was uncertainty. Suddenly a change came. The fog was still dense, but the vessel moved forward with confidence. The captain on the bridge had seen the Pile Light, doubt was changed to certainty, the fog was outrun, and a safe landing made.

"It is wonderful how little we need to see," F. W. Boreham comments upon this incident. "The captain on the bridge could not see the land, nor the houses, nor the trees, nor any of the thousand and one things that he could generally see from that spot. But he could see *one* fixed object, and that sufficed him. I used to think that, before my soul could move forward with confidence, she must see everything. I thought that, before I could venture with any assurance upon the religious life, I must understand the story of the creation, must grasp the wonder of the miracles, must have some theory of the atonement, must understand the inspiration of the Scriptures, and must be able to prove the immortality of the soul. I fancied that it was necessary, before proceeding with confidence, to see the trees and the houses and the towns of the distant city. 'Unless all these are clear to me,' I said to myself, 'I can never make port!' I have since discovered my mistake. I do not need to see the houses and the trees and the things along the shore; I only need to see the Pile Light. I do not need to see everything; I only need to see something.

'I have a life with Christ to live,
But, ere I live it, must I wait
Till learning can clear answer give
Of this and that book's date?

'I have a life in Christ to live,
I have a death in Christ to die;
And must I wait till Science give
All doubts a full reply?

'Nay, rather, while the sea of doubt
Is raging wildly round about,
Questioning of life and death and sin,
Let me but creep within
Thy fold, O Christ, and at thy feet
Take but the lowest seat,
And hear thine awful voice repeat
In gentlest accents, heavenly sweet,
"Come unto Me and rest;
Believe Me and be blest."'

"That is all; but it is enough. It is not everything; but it is the Pile Light standing out bravely through the mist.

"'What are your speculations?' asked a friend who stood beside the death-bed of Michael Faraday.

"'Speculations?' he replied in astonishment. 'Speculations? I have none. I know whom I have believed. I rest my soul upon certainties!'

"It is a great thing, when the mists of death are closing in on every side, to approach the last port with the outline of the Pile Light in full view!"

Sentence Sermons

In the name of all you hope to know, cling close to what you know already.—Phillips Brooks.

It will not hurt you, nor hurt the truth, if you should have some few questions left to be carried on with you when you go hence, for in that more luminous state they will soon be cleared.—Horace Bushnell.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What three qualities does the centurion show? (Sympathy, humility, faith.) 2. What did the centurion mean by his words in verse nine? 3. Of which one of the Beatitudes is this centurion an example? 4. Why did Jesus commend the Queen of Sheba in Luke 11.31? 5. What is your attitude toward young people of other races?

THE BELIEVING CENTURION (A Gentile Whose Faith Jesus Commended)

GOLDEN TEXT: And they shall come from the east and west, and from the north and south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. Luke 13.29

LESSON Matthew 8.5-13 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 60.1-9

MATTHEW 8.5 And when he was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, 6 and saying, Lord, my servant lieth in the house sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. 7 And he saith unto him, I will come and heal him. 8 And the centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed. 9 For I also am a man under authority, having under myself soldiers: and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. 10 And when Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. 11 And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: 12 but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. 13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; as thou hast believed, *so* be it done unto thee. And the servant was healed in that hour.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE CENTURION'S FAITH, verses 5-7. One day, as Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion approached him. A centurion was an officer in charge of a century, a company of from fifty to one hundred men, the hundredth part of a legion. This centurion was a Gentile, possibly a proselyte, who had built a synagogue for the Jews at Capernaum (Luke 7.5). He came to Jesus and told him that his servant, who was dear to him, lay at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. "Some diseases then classed as paralysis produce violent pain," we are told. "It would have been in accord with the general manners of his day—a day in which the servant was a slave without any civil rights, liable to be tortured in a court of law, and to be slain at the caprice of a brutal master—if the centurion had scorned the inmates of his own household; on the contrary, his servant was dear to him, and he trusted him with the tenderness he would show to his son. Perhaps there is no surer or severer test of the meanness or magnanimity of a man's nature than the simple question, 'How does he treat his inferiors?'"

"There are business houses in the city presided over by men calling themselves Christians—but these men are hated by their employees. There are households governed by women who are diligent in the work of the churches, but their servants never speak well of them: is no significance to be attached to such facts?" (W. J. Dawson).

Jesus immediately promised to go and heal the servant. As a Jew, he would be rendered ceremonially unclean by entering the house of a Gentile, but he was never troubled by such Jewish prejudice.

II. THE CENTURION'S FAITH, verses 8-10. The centurion declared himself unworthy of receiving so great a Guest under his roof. "Only say the word, and my servant shall be healed," he said. Then he illustrated the power of a word from Jesus by his own experience: "For I also am a man under authority, having under myself soldiers: and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth, and to another Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it." If he, a man under authority to others, could say to his soldiers, "Go," and at once they would obey, how much more might Jesus, under authority to God, say to the disease of the servant, "Go," and it would be gone! "Instantly, as it would seem, so large and true a conception of the world all held together in one sublime system of authority and obedience, running up to the highest, running down to the least of its activities, filled the soul of Jesus with delight" (Phillips Brooks). And as he marvelled at the centurion's belief that he could heal at a distance, Jesus said to those with him, "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." And then he declared

in a figure of speech that in all parts of the world there would be many possessed of as great faith as this centurion. "Many shall come from the east and the west (from everywhere) and shall sit down, (literally, recline at table) with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, in the Kingdom of heaven (see Light from Oriental Life), while the sons of the Kingdom (the Jews who thought their birth gave them a right to the Kingdom) shall be cast forth into the outer darkness (shut out from the gay feast and thrust into the dense darkness without). There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth (sorrow and anger)—part of the familiar Jewish imagery of the future world of punishment, which was typified by Gehenna.

Do not talk in your arrogance as if the pious Buddhist or Mohammedan stood forever outside the gates of God, while you are certain of a place at the banquet of heaven; if they believe sincerely all they have to believe, and live by it—and you do not—it is they who will pass into the light of God, and you who will stand without" (W. J. Dawson).

III. THE CENTURION'S REWARD, verse 13. Turning to the centurion, Jesus then said, "Go thy way; as thou has believed, so be it done unto thee." Thy blessing shall be as great as thy faith. And the servant was healed in that hour.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

My servant shall be healed, verse 8. Roman generals were noted for their cruelty to their slaves. An exception was Cicero, who possessed several other virtues uncommon in a Roman. When a devoted slave, who had served him many years, died, Cicero followed his body to the grave. The people were amazed to see him weeping, and Cicero regretted his show of feeling and apologized for having so far forgotten himself as to weep for a poor slave.

Shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, verse 11. The rabbis taught that the Messianic age would be ushered in by a great feast. All Israel, with its patriarchs, prophets, and heroes, would be there. The Gentiles would be excluded, and would have the mortification of seeing all the sumptuous preparations. Every (clean) animal that exists, and many that do not, would be eaten at the feast. The wine of the feast would have been kept in the grapes from the beginning of the world. King David would return thanks according to Psalm 116.13. Very startling, therefore, was the declaration of Jesus that Gentiles from all nations would be admitted to this Messianic feast, and many circumcised Jews (sons of the Kingdom) excluded.—One Volume Commentary.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

In chapters 5-7 Matthew gives the Sermon on the Mount, and in the two following chapters he records nine special miracles which Jesus wrought. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught as one having authority; in the recorded miracles, he acted as one having authority.

Capernaum, on the Sea of Galilee, was Jesus' headquarters at the time. Here there was a Roman garrison, hence the presence of the centurion.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

In New York City there is a great down-town church called The Church of All Nations, where some thirty-two nationalities worship. Some groups had strong prejudices against those of other racial groups until they came to know and understand them. Children of the various races play and work together in peace and harmony "until some older person's influence is injected," we are told. "Differences, if noticed at all by the children, are soon forgotten until some one who has a racial prejudice enlarges on these differences." Older persons often offend in this way without realizing the influence their words have upon the minds of children. Today their responsibility can be brought home to them in connection with our lesson.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

RACIAL PREJUDICE

Beginning the Lesson

"Probably," says Archbishop Trench, "in the general wreck of the moral institutions of the heathen world, the Roman army was one of the few in which some of

the old virtues survived." In our text we can see several virtues in the Roman officer whose faith Jesus commended, brief as the account about him is—kindliness, courtesy, humility, faith in Jesus' power and trust in Jesus' willingness to help.

We do not know that they had ever met before, but the centurion had no doubt heard of Jesus' power from others, and when he met Jesus he perceived that there was a Personality, a Power, which he could acknowledge and follow. Why did he come to Jesus? Did he ask anything of Jesus? What did he do? With what result? What then did he say? What did he mean? "The soldier presents himself to the Teacher as he might to his commanding officer. One can almost see him standing there, erect and alert, with his hand lifted in salute. And when he speaks, it is as a captain to a general; and Jesus, as he listens to this man's self-confession, hears in it just what he needs for his own cause, and welcomes the Roman officer as an example for his own disciples."

What were the officer's words regarding his own authority, and how did he see his case paralleled in Jesus?

There is a story told of some native princes of India who were being shown over a British camp when one of them exclaimed, "No wonder that these men rule; look at their discipline!" And when Jesus Christ is a real, living authority over the lives of those who call themselves Christians, when his will is their will, then will he really rule.

Faith According to Jesus

What a strange story of misinterpretation and complication the word *faith* recalls! How many Christians have been led to fancy that faith is a kind of intellectual consent, the acceptance of propositions which the reason may doubt or deny! Yet here is a Roman soldier who never heard of this kind of faith and who could not have repeated a single article of any Christian creed, but who comes to Jesus to receive orders, and in his turn to give orders; and Jesus says to the lookers-on, "This is what I mean by faith! This which this Roman Captain calls soldierliness is what I want in my disciples." Faith, in other words, is not intellectual conformity or doctrinal confession; still less is it the opposite of science or reason. Faith, according to Jesus Christ, is an attitude of the will, a habit of mind, an instinct of loyalty, which responds to the summons of truth or duty as a trained soldier hears the word of command and stands at his post; and this discipline of the will, this glad and prompt obedience, is what prepares one for self-command and for command of others, when one must either lead or be lost.—Francis Greenwood Peabody, in The Religious Education of an American Citizen.

Jesus and the Race Question

To the Jews of the time of Jesus the Kingdom of God meant a religious monopoly, with Judaism as the only stockholder. In the Jews of his time religion and racialism met and merged. It is one of the pretty ironies of history that today the Ku Klux Klan is literally copying the Jews it hates in attempting to create, as they created, a religio-racialism and doing it in the name of a Jew who denounced it. For the Founder of Christianity flatly denied the Jewish claim to special privilege.

He said he had never found among Jews such faith as he found in a certain Roman captain. He ventured the prophecy that heathen would come from the ends of the earth and sit down with the Hebrew patriarchs, while their own sons would find themselves in the discard. He did the impolitic thing of setting up a Samaritan as a model of human decency which he did not find in Hebrew priest and Levite.

This was rather bitter medicine for the one-hundred-per-cent Hebrews of this time. It was very much as if a California senator should tell his constituency of the superior virtues of the Japanese, or as if a Georgia congressman should open a campaign speech with a eulogy of the brotherhood of a Negro. With one magnificent gesture Jesus internationalized what had been until then a racial religion.

One would imagine, therefore, that Jesus would be the last figure in history anyone would think of relating, even indirectly, to a movement inspired by race consciousness and dedicated to race discrimination. The spirit of Christ and the spirit of race have nothing in common. They are at eternal variance. Christianity and racialism cannot be brought into a legitimate union.

But we must beware of falling into the easy error of assuming that we can meet the challenge of race hatred by the simple device of calling it unchristian. There is

a vast amount of race hatred in the world. And race hatred cannot be exorcised by pious exhortations about brotherhood.

The Ku Klux Klan, as I see it, is a dangerous attempt to deal with a very real problem—the race problem. In this attempt the Klan is putting Christianity to a use that is utterly alien to its spirit and purpose.

In the current discussion of the race problem it is too often assumed that we must choose between two points of view: first, the point of view of the extreme racialist who would grade the peoples of the world in a changeless hierarchy, ranging from superraces at the bottom to superraces at the top, with the races at the top forever sticking out their tongues at the races at the bottom; and, secondly, the point of view of the extreme sentimentalist who, in the name of a theoretical brotherhood, would have us adopt a policy of unrestricted immigration, encourage intermarriage of the races, and so on. But are we restricted to these two points of view, both of which, it seems to me, are intellectually sterile and socially sinister? I think not.

There are, as I see it, two major questions involved in the race problem. And if we are to think realistically about the relation of Christianity to the race problem we must keep the distinction between these two questions clearly in mind:

First, there is question of scientific fact. What are the facts about the races? Are some races inherently and eternally inferior? If so, have our researches been extensive enough to enable us to say with scientific accuracy which is which?

Secondly, there is a question of social procedure. What are we to do with the facts about race character and race mixture, after we find them? In what temper and by what technic are we to relate them to national policies?

I suggest that on the first of these questions—the question of scientific fact—Christianity has absolutely nothing to say. Jesus was not a biologist and he did not anticipate the researches of anthropology. It is only on the second of these questions—the question of social procedure—that Christianity has something to say. Christianity cannot help us to find the facts about race character and race mixture, but Christianity can help us to face the facts in a temper and with a technic that will help rather than hinder the development of a happy and harmonious civilization. In other words, the thing Christianity has to contribute toward a solution of the race problem is not information but a point of view. It can help us use the facts about race wisely after we discover them.

And this particular world view will, I suggest, help us to use the facts of race in a way that will, as far as may be humanly possible, enable us to realize race harmony instead of race conflict. I mention only two aspects of the Christian world view: its contention that moral values are supreme in private lives and in public affairs, and its reverence for personality, for the individual human being.

I suggest that if civilization is to endure, we must bring these two elements into the point of view from which we valuate and use the facts about race character and race mixture, entirely regardless of what those facts finally prove to be. These two elements are almost entirely missing from the point of view of the extreme racialists.—Condensed from an Article in the Adult Bible Class Monthly, by Glenn Frank.

Democracy and Caste

Democracy is a force of opinion and feeling, working within humanity, and impelling the people of a given neighborhood.

It is a neighborhood affair. That is to say, it has to do with all the human creatures in any territory, without regard to Class.

It is diametrically opposed to Class, any kind of Class, whether of race, color, opinion, religion, education or anything else.

The whole Class business, in whatever form, and under whatever specious plea, is Democracy's arch-enemy. A rule by the Proletariat Class would be just as bad as a rule by the Capitalist Class.

When the Bolsheviki got control in Russia they showed themselves to be as bloody and tyrannical as the Czar and his bureaucrats. That is because Bolshevism and Czarism are precisely the same thing. They are made out of the same material—Class.

A copper cent may be heads on one side and tails on the other, but it's all copper.

Class feeling is strong in us, through centuries of training. Democracy, the sense of the Common Good, the nerve of Humanity, is still weak in us. It is too new.—Frank Crane, in The Red Cross Magazine.

Rabindranath Tagore's Word to Us

The problems of race unity which we have been trying to solve for so many years have likewise to be faced by you in America. Many people in your country ask me what is happening as to the caste distinctions in India; but when this question is asked me it is usually done with a superior air. And I feel tempted to put the same question to our American critics with a slight modification: "What have you done with the red Indian and the Negro?" For you have not got over your attitude of caste toward them. You have used violent methods to keep aloof from other races, but until you have solved the question in America you have no right to question India.

Robert Loveman's Song

What care I for caste or creed?
It is the deed, it is the deed;
What for class or what for clan?
It is the man, it is the man;
Heirs of love, and joy, and woe,
Who is high, and who is low?
Mountain, valley, sky, and sea,
Are for all humanity.

What care I for robe or stole?
It is the soul, it is the soul;
What for crown, or what for crest?
It is the heart within the breast;
It is the faith, it is the hope,
It is the struggle up the slope.
It is the brain and eye to see
One God, and one humanity.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. How Jesus set at naught Jewish prejudices and customs.

2. The difficult art of being a Jew today. See article with this title in The Outlook for January 10, 1923.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. How do you understand Jesus' words in verse 18? 2. What qualities has one to whom wealth is a blessing? 3. What qualities has one to whom wealth is a curse? 4. What did Jesus teach about true riches in the Sermon on the Mount? 5. Can the desire for riches be as great a stumbling block to a poor man as the possession of riches to a rich man? 6. What besides wealth may prevent one from following Christ? 7. Is there anything which prevents you from following him? 8. Is it right for a wealthy Christian man to leave all his wealth to his family and none to good causes? 9. How is money a test of character?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

BEING FAIR TO OTHER RACES

Beginning the Lesson

See the preceding topic.

President Taft's Rebuke of Anti-Semitism

When Judge Taft was President he sent a communication to the Secretary of War directing him to reprimand an army officer who had shown prejudice against a private in his command because he was of Jewish ancestry. The soldier was a candidate for admission to West Point, and the officer, after reciting the facts of his parentage and humble social standing, wrote upon his examination papers:—"I would not desire him in my command as an officer and a social and personal associate. I have found, except in few cases, few communities where Jews are received as desirable social associates." He acknowledged that the young man was "honest, upright, ambitious and probably deserving," but he drew the line against him because he was a Jew. In his letter to the Secretary of War, the President expressed severe condemnation of this attitude, and ordered that the candidate be admitted to examination for a lieutenancy.

Public sentiment will sustain the President, the Christian Herald commented at the time. "There is no room for anti-Semitism here, either in the army or in civil life, and its appearance in this form is an anomaly which deserved the prompt and effective rebuke it encountered. Had the officer in question studied the pages of American history, he might have saved himself the shame of official condemnation. There he might have learned that it was a Jew, Santangel, who financed the memorable voyage of Columbus; that the same race was represented in the foundation period of our government, and that our forefathers were not unappreciative of the worth of the Jew as a citizen. The Jew has borne his part honorably as a citizen from Colonial days to the present. By sea and land he has indicated his courage and his right to all the privileges of an American. To endorse or permit to pass unrebuked any official act directed against a Jew because of his race and religion, would be catering to a dangerous prejudice which has involved other countries in shame and disgrace—a prejudice which is altogether out of place in our land of freedom and religious toleration."

Remarkable Virtues of Men of Other Races

In the Parable of the Good Samaritan, who was it that proved himself a neighbor to the man in need, while his Jewish compatriots passed him by? How did the Jews regard the Samaritans? A hated Samaritan did the kind deed which the Jews would not do.

A Roman Centurion

The centurion, who humbly deemed himself not worthy of having the Master enter his dwelling, and whose faith in Jesus was so great that he could say, "Only say the word, and my servant shall be healed," was a Roman, not a Jew, and Jesus, marveling, said of his faith, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." A hated Roman proved superior to the Jews in faith.

And you recall how Jesus contrasted the appreciative Queen of Sheba with his own unappreciative generation: "The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here."

There are virtues in men of all races, and often the men of races other than our own put us to shame by their superiority in some way. Jean Kenyon Mackenzie, writing in a recent missionary study book, speaks of people whom we have called heathens as having a special "genius for the things of the Spirit." "Those regions where the Things of God have been established before the things of foreign industry, the things of commerce, the things of Islam, all rigid, inflexible things and foreign to the primitive spirit," she writes; "those regions have shown a genius for the things of the Spirit which have been the envy of those who have witnessed it. Never, never pity the men or women whose mission has cast their lot in the pioneer or primitive phases. Envy them who see our Lord at work on the primitive heart—busy like a divine blacksmith, with the breath of his Spirit and the fire of his Spirit making out of that heart a tool for his own hand. Be sure that those who witness these things dread that time, sooner or later, when the things of confusion, the alien things, have come to press their influence."

In another book Jean Mackenzie speaks of the remarkable faith of the Bulus of Africa:

"The Bulu is a man of faith, all missionaries are agreed upon this. By an initial

act of faith he goes out from his own country—the familiar things of sex and gain and fetish, the shelter of custom—not knowing whither he goeth. 'The old things of the past,' said a man to me, 'are to my heart ve belik'; which is to say a deserted village, no longer inhabited and falling into ruin.

"'What will you do tomorrow?' I ask a woman, and she says to me, 'Why will you ask me of tomorrow? The path of tomorrow—God will show me that path,' and God who has shown the Bantu 'the straight path' compensates his daring child with a near sense of the unseen.

"'I am a carrier,' says a friend of mine, 'and the load I carry is the ten tyings [commandments] and the things of God. Heavy as they are I will bear to carry them, because this is the order. Though the path is bad there is a Man ahead of me.'

"This Man in the path ahead—how much he figures in the annals. 'Yesus shows me the path. 'Yesus helps my heart.' 'Yesus gives me an iron heart.' 'Because of Yesus, I endure!' Who are we to say of that caravan threading the forest, that they do not endure as seeing him who is invisible?"

A Chinese of Great Faith

A missionary in Central China after preaching all day in a village, rested for the night in the open court of a Chinese inn. With him was an aged Chinese evangelist. After the evening prayer, they rolled themselves up in their blankets side by side. Then the missionary said to his Chinese friend, "Brother Shi, is Jesus real to you?" And the aged man answered, "Brother, he is more real to me than you are." "How can that be? You can talk to me and touch me. You cannot hear his voice or touch his form." The old man turned his face toward the missionary and replied in words full of feeling: "My brother, I sometimes misunderstand you, and you sometimes misunderstand me, but Jesus and I never misunderstand each other."

Starting upon a Fair Basis

Doctor Johns, a missionary to the Pueblos, had lived among them for some time, striving to make clear to them his own belief in an invisible God and Savior, and a world beyond the grave. One day the chief gravely summoned him to an audience.

"There is a grasshopper chirping on the other bank of the river. Do you hear it?" The doctor, smiling, shook his head.

"Two deer are hiding in the grass on yonder hill. Do you see them?" "No."

"My son, down in the camp, has lighted his pipe. Can you smell the smoke of it?" "No. My senses are not trained as yours are."

"Yet you have them. You are not half the man you ought to be. If you will not take the trouble to train the eyes and nose and ears, which have been given you to understand this world, why should I think that you understand that other, or take your word about it?"

Missionaries sometimes begin their work with a belief that all heathen are naturally ignorant and vicious, and are upholders of religions which they know are false. It is only when the missionaries stand upon a fair basis with them, giving them credit for good purposes and sincerity in a faith which is the best they know, that they can help them.

This is true, whether the heathen live on the banks of the Congo or in the back alleys of our own cities.—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons

God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him.—Peter.

I can love the men of Papua: I find in them a kinship with the best in me.—Chalmers.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. How do we know that the man who came and kneeled to Jesus was a young man? (Mt. 19.22.) 2. What does Luke 18.18 call him? 3. Why did Jesus love the young man? 4. Tell Luke's parable (12.16-21) of a man who trusted in his riches. 5. How did Esau make a great refusal? 6. What Old Testament character was ruined by the love of possessions? (Lot.) 7. Why is it hard for the rich man to enter the Kingdom? 8. Explain the meaning of verses 24 and 25 (Recall Lesson IV, Second Quarter).

THE RICH YOUNG RULER (Refusing a Life of Sacrificial Service)

GOLDEN TEXT: And he said unto all, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. Luke 9.23

LESSON Mark 10.17-27 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 19.7-14

MARK 10.17 And as he was going forth into the way, there ran one to him, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? 18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good save one, *even* God. 19 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor thy father and mother. 20 And he said unto him, Teacher, all these things have I observed from my youth. 21 And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. 22 But his countenance fell at the saying, and he went away sorrowful: for he was one that had great possessions.

23 And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! 24 And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 26 And they were astonished exceedingly, saying unto him, Then who can be saved? 27 Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for all things are possible with God.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. REFUSING A LIFE OF SACRIFICIAL SERVICE, verses 17-22. See Explanations and Comments for the Fourth Lesson of the Second Quarter. In Matthew the rich young man's question reads. "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" and Jesus' reply is, "Why asketh thou me concerning that which is good?" Mark and Luke give the question as, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" and the reply of Jesus is, "Why callest thou me good? None is good save one, even God." Jesus' question as given here seems to indicate that the young man had used the word *good* (Good Master) with as little thought as we do when we say "Good morning"; Jesus would have him weigh his words and see whether he meant what he had said. If he were calling him good in the sense in which God is good, Jesus would accept his homage. Jesus always wanted those who came to him to know what being his disciple meant, to weigh well the consequences of such a step before entering it. See Light from Oriental Life.

II. THE PERIL OF RICHES, verses 23-26. See Lesson IV, Second Quarter.

"The rich are saved in spite of their riches, and not by means of them" (Percy C. Ainsworth).

"When a man becomes rich God gains a partner or the man loses his soul."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

There ran one to him, verse 17. No common reason will ever lead the oriental to break his slow, sedate, and dignified walk.—Ewing.

All these things have I observed from my youth, verse 20. See Lesson IV, Second Quarter.

It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of heaven, verse 25. See Lesson IV, Second Quarter.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

What teacher of young men will not be arrested by the words, "Jesus looking upon him loved him"! What possibilities the teacher sees in the young men of whom he is the leader, and how he longs to see those latent possibilities developed and rightly directed! They are impetuous like that rich young ruler of old; they have good impulses like his; they need to follow the Christ and devote their power to his service.

The question which the disciples asked shows their perplexity: it also shows how frankly they gave utterance to their perplexities in the presence of the Great Teacher. "Jesus not only draws men to him, he leads them to open their inmost thinking to him. He never breaks through their reserve, but he somehow induces them to break through that reserve themselves. He stands at the door and knocks, and men hear his voice, and open the door, and invite him in." This is a mark of the Great Teacher: it is a mark of all successful teachers.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

WHAT FOLLOWING CHRIST MEANS

Beginning the Lesson

Three centuries ago, if a man was well, or *weal,* to use the Old English word, he was said to be blessed with wealth. When the Authorized Version of our Bible was written in 1611, no one misunderstood the meaning of 1 Corinthians 10.24, "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth." Now, however, the explanation has to be given that wealth here has its original meaning of welfare. To us, wealth means abundance of material good, financial welfare.

Riches have always been prized. Away back in the time of Abraham riches were considered a mark of God's favor. In the time of Christ the priests were using their office so as to amass private fortunes. Then, as now, "all doors flew open to the rich," and it was a new thought, that of our lesson of today, that riches were to some a positive hindrance to entrance into the Kingdom of God.

Wherein the Moralist Fell Short

The outstanding characteristic of the rich young ruler is his morality, which must never, under any circumstances, be depreciated. Morality is beautiful and august, wherever found. The sheer moral weight of Socrates, Marcus Aurelius, and kindred spirits in all ages and climes, is immeasurable.

Having many virtues, what is the one thing that the moralist lacks? Just this: the moralist is the victim of a mechanical code rather than the disciple of a living Master. After keeping the law, he still asks, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Ah! here is our moralist's trouble, always, everywhere—no matter what he does, no matter how well he does it, somehow he fails of vital inner satisfaction.

It is a truism that a moral man is the hardest man in the world to convert. Why is this? Simply because he joins the company of those who trust in themselves that they are righteous.—Frederick F. Shannon, in the Breath of the Winds.

What Following Christ Means

If this young man had made the right choice, if he had gladly agreed to give his possessions to the poor and then to come and follow Jesus, do you not think that Jesus would then have said to him, "You may keep your wealth and use it rightly, for now you are no longer under its snare, you have ceased to put it first in your thoughts, you now have room in your heart for me"?

Francis of Assisi thought that Jesus meant we should all become paupers. Ruskin possessed great wealth but he gave it all to the poor, first a tenth of his fortune, then a third, a half, and finally all his means. What if everyone should follow their example? The question for us is not, Shall I sell everything and give the proceeds to the poor? but, What is the best way in which I can help relieve suffering and distress of others? The spirit of Jesus' command is to be followed, not the method. "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself," said Jesus. It is not the sacrifice of all our possessions, but the sacrifice of self that Jesus asks of his followers.

To another man from whom Jesus had cast out demons and who asked permission to follow him, Jesus said: "Go to thy house unto thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and how he had mercy on thee." That man, too, was following Jesus. Each one must decide how best he can serve the Master whom he seeks to follow. Using every means in our power to promote the Kingdom of God in the world is to follow Christ.

A Follower of Christ Uses his Riches for Others

One thing stands between that youth and his service of the Kingdom. It is his wealth. What can one who loves him propose but a heroic remedy? It is a case

where alleviating treatment must fail, when the wise physician must with apparent cruelty counsel a capital operation. It is a situation familiar in modern life. A young man, well-born and well-bred, winsome and gallant, is withheld from the effective use of his life by the weight of his possessions. If he could only forget that he is rich, and give himself to strenuous work, he might do gallant service. If some dramatic summons like an actual war is heard by him, the follies of his luxury and self-indulgence drop away from him, and he becomes the most enduring and daring of soldiers. Meantime, however, here he is, with hardly a fair chance for a useful life, turning play into work, and sinking into a false and foolish estimate of life and happiness. What hope is there for such a young man except through some radical change, curative though cruel, like the surgeon's knife?

To many a man, ensnared in the complex and intense conditions of modern life, to many a man and woman tempted almost beyond their strength by self-indulgence, narrow interests, and practical materialism, the message of Jesus comes with convincing force. Such persons know well that it is hard for those who have riches to enter into the Kingdom. They know how difficult it is to maintain religious ideals, genuine simplicity, and breadth of sympathy among the exotic and artificial circumstances of a prosperous life. They see how frequently the possession of riches becomes a curse, and how often the children for whom the father has labored are but the worse for the abundance which he has secured, as though they had asked him for bread and he had given them a stone. They have to confess that it is easier for the poor than for the rich to be poor in spirit. Such persons, however, when they look once more at the world of modern life observe that the stern demand of Jesus is sometimes met; that—here and there—riches are deliberately and consistently held as a trust from God, and the way of service is made broad and straight through the ministry of wealth; and they recognize the wisdom of Jesus, when, having said so unreservedly, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God!" he is still able to say of the man who had faithfully used his many talents, "Blessed is that servant, . . . Of a truth I say unto you, that he will set him over all that he hath."—Francis Greenwood Peabody, in Jesus Christ and the Social Question.

What Following Christ Meant to a British Brewery Owner

A book entitled The Great Acceptance gives an account of the life of F. N. Charrington of England, who as a young man had great possessions, but feeling called upon to give them up—a million and a quarter in value—and follow Christ, he did so gladly. This was "the Great Acceptance." The incident which was to him the call befell him when he was trying to serve both God and mammon, being the owner of a great brewery and also a Christian worker in the slums of London. One day he was passing a saloon when a poor woman with several children clinging to her skirts went up to the swinging doors and called to her husband within, saying: "Oh, Tom, do give me some money, the children are crying for bread." The man came out and kicked her into the gutter. Mr. Charrington tells the result to him. "Just then I looked up and saw my own name, Charrington, in huge gilt letters, on the top of the public house. I thought, as if in a flash, that whatever the actual statistics might have been, there was, at any rate, an appalling and incalculable amount of wretchedness and degradation caused by our enormous business. What a frightful responsibility rested upon us! And then and there, without any hesitation, I said to myself, in reference to the sodden brute who had knocked his wife into the gutter: "Well, you have knocked your poor wife down, and with the same blow you have knocked me out of the brewery business!"

Despite family pleadings, Mr. Charrington gave up his interest in the brewery and has since devoted his time to evangelistic work. Now he speaks night after night at the Great Assembly Hall, the largest mission-hall in the world, and it is always thronged, and he devotes the daytime to a large number of Christian activities, especially to finding and aiding the deserving poor.

A Follower of Christ Denies himself for Others

The doctor leaned back in his chair, "There's nothing the matter with you, young woman," he said, "except—unused power."

Agatha Gilder looked at him in incredulous amazement. Nothing the matter with her, when head, eyes, heart, nerves and everything were wrong!

"What do you mean?" she gasped.

"What have you been doing during the past year?" the doctor asked in reply.

"Why, the usual things."

"Made any new friends?"

"One doesn't make a friend every year."

"Doesn't one?" The doctor looked as if he had discovered a new symptom. "Well, then, any pleasant acquaintances that with a little cultivation might grow to be friends?"

Agatha shook her head impatiently. "I do not care for many people," she replied coldly.

The doctor said no more on that subject. "How about interests? Any new ones? Suffrage? Civics? Child welfare? Anything of that sort?"

"No," Agatha replied shortly.

"Any new study? Travel? Work?"

Agatha shook her head.

"Tired of everything? Everything lost its flavor?"

The last question was more sympathetic, and the tears came to Agatha's eyes. "That's it exactly," she answered.

The doctor struck his desk heavily with his hand. "Thank heaven, you are tired of it, Agatha Gilder! Your whole body and mind are protesting at the way you've treated them, sulking, mutinying because all the splendid powers that are in them are going to waste. What a year, girl! The shabbiest little bundle wrapper who is using her opportunities is richer than you. You expect freshness and zest to stay in your life when you don't lift your finger to renew them. A Dead Sea, all intake and no outflow!"

Agatha's face was crimson. "It's very easy to say!" she protested.

The doctor's eyes softened. "Of course it is, child—and hard to do. But are you going to be a quitter forever? Go out and earn your living for a year or study to prepare yourself to do it. Or go to a new place and win friends. Good heavens, girl, with a whole universe round you, teeming with interest, you cry because you are bored! Whose fault is it? God's?"

The girl rose and said good-by politely but frigidly.

The doctor sank back in his chair. "Talk about surgery!" he muttered.—The Youth's Companion.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Owen Wister says in one of his books that the American would rather be rich than good, and he is having his wish: is he right? "It is good to have money, and the things that money can buy, but it's good, too, to check up once in a while, and make sure that you haven't lost the things that money won't buy."

2. Some people who are themselves trying their best to get rich are loud in their denunciations of those who have acquired riches. To worship the mammon that others possess is no better than to worship that which one himself possesses.

3. Is it wise for a man to let death distribute his charities?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What were the duties of a publican? 2. In what sense was Zacchæus "lost" before Christ's coming to him? 3. What parable did Jesus give in refutation of the charge against him of associating with sinners? 4. Contrast Jesus' treatment of this rich man with his treatment of the rich young ruler: why the difference? 5. Do Christian principles apply in buying and selling? 6. Are religion and modern business separate compartments in life?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

CHOICES WHICH MUST BE MADE

Beginning the Lesson

Ribera was a poor, struggling Spanish artist, when a rich man discovered his genius and offered him a place in his palace, where he had every luxury. While friendless and almost starving, Ribera had devoted himself untiringly to his beloved art, but when surrounded by all that wealth could buy his zeal lagged, for the new life of pleasure took much of his time, and weakened his artistic vision and skill. He came to himself at length, and realizing that his genius was suffering an eclipse, resolved upon a courageous step. He gave up his living, and tried once

ZACCHÆUS THE PUBLICAN (A Business Man Converted)

GOLDEN TEXT: The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost. Luke 19.10

LESSON Luke 19.1-10 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 15

LUKE 19.1 And he entered and was passing through Jericho. 2 And behold, a man called by name Zacchæus; and he was a chief publican, and he was rich. 3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the crowd, because he was little of stature. 4 And he ran on before, and climbed up into a sycomore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. 5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and said unto him, Zacchæus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house. 6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. 7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner. 8 And Zacchæus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold. 9 And Jesus said unto him, To-day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE RESOURCEFUL ONLOOKER, verses 1-4. When Jesus was passing through Jericho, a great crowd assembled to see him. The rich Commissioner of Taxes, or chief publican, Zacchæus by name, being short of stature, realized that he would be unable to see Jesus. And no doubt the hostile crowd elbowed off the hated tax collector. He was, however, a determined and resourceful man, and ran on ahead of the crowd and climbed up into a sycomore tree by the side of the road by which Jesus would soon pass. This was not the English sycamore, but a tree which has been described as a fig-mulberry, because its fruit resembles in appearance the fig, and its leaves those of the mulberry. Recall our lesson about Amos, who was a dresser of sycomore trees. The tree has a short trunk, and wide-spreading branches.

"Zacchæus ran before, we are told. Sometimes a man reveals the secret of his strength in some apparently insignificant deed. The forcefulness of the will of Zacchæus lies not especially in the fact that he climbed the tree, but in the fact that he ran before. He anticipated Jesus. He saw which way Jesus was to pass, and made preparations for the best view. Shrewd business man that he was, he had been accustomed to run before men, thinking ahead of them, getting ready for them as they came down his road. He had the gift of prevision, and with this prevision supplemented his shortcomings. Little of stature, he added a number of cubits to his height by climbing a tree. Detested by his neighbors, he got their money away from them by thinking on ahead of them. Zacchæus was a rare man—a man likely to succeed either at good or bad, according as he turned to one or to the other" (Francis J. McConnell).

II. THE SELF-INVITED GUEST, verses 5-7. When Jesus reached the sycomore tree he looked up and saw Zacchæus, and at once called him by name. "The tax-collector in Palestine, by reason of the nefarious system in vogue (see Light from Oriental Life), stood socially where a gambler or rumseller stands with us. He was ostracized. He could not even go to church without hearing some Pharisee say in his prayer, 'Thank God I am not as this tax-collector.' It meant everything, therefore, when this Master of men looked up into the sycomore tree and said, 'Zacchæus.' The people of Jericho never addressed him thus. They called him wolf, dog, bear. These were the affectionate terms orthodox Jews employed in addressing publicans."

No Jewish rabbi would have offered to stay at a publican's house, but Jesus said to Zacchæus, "Make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house." His "must" was that of a shepherd who would care for a lost sheep. When Zacchæus dropped from the branches with great joy and hastened homeward with Jesus, the people began to murmur saying, "He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner." What especially troubled the Jews was that Jesus did not observe their rites. "He might think as he liked, but the intolerable thing was that he did not practise. What! he did not fast! He did not refrain from a single one of the thirty-nine works forbidden on the Sabbath day! He associated with sinners, con-

tinually contracted uncleannesses, and did not so much as dream of perceiving it! And he required nothing of his disciples, taught them nothing of what he permitted and what forbidden, and the apostles never fasted! He said, 'Give alms, and all things are clean unto you'—what a scandal! The Pharisees were ruffled to the last degree" (Edmond Stapfer).

"It cost Christ something that day to enroll himself as a friend of Zacchæus. But he was willing to pay the full price of doing good in his own way. There was never an hour when he was not willing to be wounded for the transgression of others, to be bruised for their iniquities, and to accept stripes of all sorts that they might be healed. His readiness to incur the suspicion and hatred of Jericho by putting himself to open personal alliance with that better nature which he saw in the publican was one of the elements of his power" (Charles Reynolds Brown).

"God pity us if we should become so sagacious and prudent as never to venture on the prospect, uncertain though it may be, of that man within the man! God pity the world if Christ had been thus careful of the investment of his trust! If you want to help that man who ought to be, into being, believe in him. Believe in the capacity of the man who has fallen into the mud. Believe in the woman whom the Pharisees are ready to stone. Believe in that hidden capacity for a nobler life, and your own faith will become a mighty agent in God's hand for the bringing out of that better self" (Charles R. Brown).

III. THE CONVERSION OF A BUSINESS MAN, verses 8-10. "Think of Zacchæus on the morning of that day! He was the chief among the publicans and he was rich. Full of guilty gains, and entirely impenitent. In the far North the quicksilver freezes in the thermometer, which of course ceases to register, and the instrument is useless; but let the temperature rise, and the quicksilver becomes at once nimble and useful. That morning in Zacchæus the moral quicksilver was frozen, and most likely it had been for years; he, however, no sooner stood in the white, fierce light of embodied righteousness than the quicksilver thawed, conscience acted, and the publican was convicted" (W. L. Watkinson). Not a word had been said about his peculations; yet in the presence of the righteous Lord he voluntarily and promptly made a clean breast of it.

"Ere God forgive the guilt
Make man some restitution" (Browning).

Zacchæus used the present tense as a vivid way of asserting his future course of action: "Behold, Lord," he said, "the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold." His very business brought with it great temptations. Tax collectors were not paid a fixed sum for their labor. They paid over to the Roman Government a fixed amount, and then they overcharged and oppressed the people so as to have a good surplus for themselves. A tax payer could appeal to law, but what chance would he have in accusing an official of the Roman Government before a Roman Judge?

"Zacchæus saw very quickly what he would have to do to be a follower of Christ. He did not wait for Christ to tell him of restoration or almsgiving. He ran ahead and saw what it was necessary to do. There was tainted money in his possession—money with a real taint—and this was to be restored to the people from whom it came. This was only common honesty, and Zacchæus saw this point with amazing directness. Then the other point as to the need of giving to the poor—how quickly Zacchæus saw that! This discipleship of Zacchæus meant vital change of life from the very outset. It went straight to ethical living and wrought a transformation. How long it takes the followers of Jesus sometimes to grasp the lesson, which Zacchæus saw at the beginning, that the discipleship which is to count must work its way into the life of moral doing, that money is to be earned honestly and disposed of as a trust given by God! The world has been long years in overtaking this publican from Jericho" (Francis J. McConnell).

"Today is salvation come to this house (to Zacchæus with his family and his servants)," said Jesus "for as much as he also is a son of Abraham, (a true Israelite in descent and character, despite what his neighbors thought)."

For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost. "If the mission of an ordinary person is important, what shall we say of the mission of the mightiest Person in history? Moreover, when this Supreme Person, in his life,

character, and words, insists that his coming to earth is to save the men and women in it, how shall we adequately measure his mission? We simply cannot do it; it lies beyond our powers" (Frederick W. Shannon).

"'Lost' on the lips of Jesus, means 'out of its place.' The lost coin was lost, because it was out of its place with the other coins. The sheep was lost, because it was away from the rest of the fold. The prodigal son was lost because he was away from the father's house and his proper place. The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost. To your life and mine, which is often out of its place, Christ comes with the assurance that there is a place for us in God's order; that we were born into this world to occupy a place with the Father, and that he has come to the world to bring us back to our right place, and to assure us that, whatever other people may think of us, and whatever we may think of ourselves, the Lord believes in us" (James Moffatt).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

A chief publican, verse 2. We find at the head the farmer-general, who was a Roman knight, and to whom were assigned the whole taxes of a province for a certain number of years, usually five. Under him were the *publicani majores,* the chief publicans, among whom was Zacchæus. They collected the taxes for the empire. Lastly, under their orders, came the *publicani minores,* the tax-gatherers properly so-called. They examined the goods and collected the tolls on roads and bridges.—Edmond Stapfer.

At the Receipt of Custom

If I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, verse 8. Of course, the joint-stock company of *Publicani* at Rome expected its handsome dividends; so did the tax-gatherers in the provinces, and those to whom they on occasions sublet the imposts. All wanted to make money from the poor people; and the cost of the collection had to be added to the taxation. Nothing was more common than for the publican to put a fictitious value on property or income. Another favorite trick of theirs was to advance the tax to those who were unable to pay, and then to charge usurious interest on what had thereby become a public debt.—Alfred Edersheim, in Sketches of Jewish Social Life.

I restore fourfold, verse 8. A traveler in India describes a pagan way of atoning for misdeeds. Two men were measuring the circumference of Lhasa. They threw themselves down the length of their whole bodies, resting on their hands, then drawing their legs to them, they stood up to prostrate themselves again immediately, this time placing their feet where their heads had last been. Think of the length of time, and above all of the patience it requires to make thus the tour of the Holy City, a distance of about thirteen miles! Others, instead of measuring the way by the length of their persons, measure it by the width of their faces; they touch their foreheads to the ground, then, changing places laterally, they press their faces again at the spot next to the one they have just touched. It takes the pilgrim one month to make the tour of Lhasa in this fashion. It is a much longer method, but is not nearly so painful as the other.

ZACCHÆUS THE PUBLICAN

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

From John's statement in 12.1, it is inferred that Jesus reached Jericho on Thursday of the week before his crucifixion, and spent the night in the home of Zacchæus.

Jericho is five miles north of the Dead Sea and five miles west of the Jordan where there were two fords across the river. It is difficult for one to realize who has seen it today, with its few squalid mud huts, that it was once a very important city, known as "The City of Palms" and "The City of Perfumes," and famed for its dates and balsam. "Herod had built its walls, its theatre and amphitheatre; Archelaus its new palace, surrounded by splendid gardens. The fertility of its soil and its tropical produce were almost proverbial. Its palm groves and gardens of roses, but especially its balsam plantations, were the fairyland of the old world." Through Jericho lay the route from Damascus and Persia to Judea and Egypt, and the city must have had a number of tax-collectors.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Consider how Jesus treated Zacchæus. As F. W. Robertson reminds us, he did not talk to him about his soul; he did not preach to him about his sins; he did not force the way into his house to lecture him; he simply said, "I must abide at thy house," thereby acknowledging the publican as a brother. In its insight into and perfect sympathy with all humanity, the heart of Jesus differs from all human hearts, but here, as everywhere, we must follow our Great Teacher, even though from afar.

The heart of Zacchæus that was hardened by contempt and reproach was stirred and reformed by friendliness and brotherliness. Zacchæeus did not know all that Jesus is, but he was saved by the gracious and mighty Person who entered into personal relationship with him for one brief evening. His whole life was changed. Our pupils need to think of Christ not only as their Savior but as their Friend, living in daily personal relationship with them.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

MAKING BUSINESS CHRISTIANS

Beginning the Lesson

Is curiosity a virtue? Idle curiosity which leads one to investigate affairs that do not concern him, is usually a fault, but without legitimate curiosity there would be little progress made in the world's work. "In essence, curiosity is the spirit that is alive to the wonder of the world, that wants to find out what things are made of, how they work, and what they can be used for. It has led the scientist and the inventor to great discoveries, and in Zacchæus' case it led to the saving of a soul. There is no suggestion at the outset that Zacchæus wanted to ask anything of Jesus, or felt any conscious need of what the Lord could do for him. He was just curious about him; he wanted to see what Christ was like. As some of us stand in a crowd to see a great man drive by, to catch a glimpse of a general or a president, so that man having heard of Jesus, the words he said and the things he did, and perhaps most of all, that he was upsetting the authorities and seemed friendly to the outcast, was curious about him. He had formed, as we all do, some mental picture of the Man of Nazareth, and was pricked by the desire to get a look at him. Not a very high motive, you say; but Jesus can do something with any motive that brings men into real contact with him." What was the result in the case of Zacchæus?

The Man amid the Foliage

The world has wasted much pity on Zacchæus. It has conceived of him as a humble soul, small and inconspicuous, whose desire to see Jesus would have been frustrated if he had not been able to find a convenient sycomore to climb.

As matter of fact, Zacchæus was probably the best-known and most hated man in Jericho. He was a shrewd politician who knew how to play subject Jew against master Roman so successfully that he had obtained the fattest patronage plum in the whole region. It was a very influential personage who had the curiosity to know Jesus.

The sycomore tree that helped Zacchæeus realize his desire was low-branched and thick with foliage. Easy to climb even by a pudgy, well-fed man of middle age, it afforded him concealment with its leaves. The chances are that Zacchæus when he climbed his sycomore was thinking both of seeing Jesus and of not being seen himself. It would have been undignified for an official in his position to be too inquisi-

tive about this new religious leader. Zacchæus never expected to be discovered, least of all to be converted.

But the Master had a penetrating eye. He would not have been surprised to see small boys perched in the branches, but a full-grown man was different. Important people do not relish being caught in ungraceful situations, and Zacchæus did not look impressive trying to play bird in the top of the tree. But Jesus was no respecter of persons. So in a clear voice he called out, "Zacchæus, make haste and come down, for today I must abide at thy house."

A Sycomore Tree

Jesus is always searching out the man hidden amid the foliage. He has a directness of appeal that cuts through all excuses and makeshifts. He never stops with the externals, but pierces through to the essentials. There is a powerful thrust, as the fencer would say, to the religion of the Master. It finds us, reveals us, shames us.

How dearly we love to secrete our real selves amid the foliage of conventionalities or traditions or habits! So concealed, our inmost souls are often quite unknown to our neighbors and kindred, sometimes almost to ourselves. But then comes the word of Jesus, and it snatches us out of our hiding-place. It flashes upon us a revelation of what we really are. As we hear him speak we feel how far short of the ideal we are falling, and are stirred with divine aspiration for higher and more God-like things.

Zacchæus surrendered his aerie in the treetop, but he found something better. He found for himself, with the Master's help, a place in the Kingdom of God.—The Youth's Companion.

The Taste for Twists

G. A. Birmingham (Canon Hannay), the novelist, is reported recently to have said that love stories are on the wane. "The public today wants twists, not kisses." He explains that "a story with a twist is one where the principal people or events turn out absolutely different in the end from what they look like in the beginning. Thus the bishop turns out on the last page but one to be a landscape painter composing, not a new Prayer Book, but a new hair dye. It makes the reader feel what a clever fellow he is."

But tastes are very apt to have their roots in human nature. If people want twists in their novels, may it not be because they have something within themselves that strongly insists that persons and events must turn out different from what they seem in the beginning? Is there not something in us that refuses to accept the dull, prosaic facts of life, the commonplace, self-evident interpretation of experience, something that keeps us believing in and looking for the surprise which is bound to come before the story ends?

Perhaps this taste for twists will lead us back again to the pages of the Gospel story. Here nothing turns out as it looks at first glance. The wayward boy is not at all what he seems to be. Yes, he goes off into the far country and lives wildly, and he certainly has the appearance of a fool and a failure. But "on the last page but one" we see him as he really is. He is the loving son of a great-hearted father, a hero not because he has sinned, but because his sin stirred up within him the undying divine spark.

There is Zacchæus, not at all the person he looks like when we first make his acquaintance. His fellow-townsmen do not know him. There are elements of moral surprise within his make-up which no one suspects. The "twist" appears when the influence of Jesus touches him. The taste for twists seems to indicate a human interest which may turn for its deepest satisfaction to the story of the grace of God in Jesus Christ.—Dorr F. Diefendorf.

Zacchæus as a Business Man before and after Meeting Christ

Zacchæus must have been a keen business man or he would not have held his position of collector of taxes in so important a financial center as was Jericho. He

must have been a man who "put business first." or he would not have braved the contempt of his fellow Jews by serving the Roman Government in the hated capacity of a collector of taxes from them.

It was sordid business, that of tax-collecting. The popular opinion of a publican has been made strikingly clear by some one who says that Zacchæus occupied the same position as a Belgium custom-house collector who would have taken service under the German Government during the War and become wealthy in the process. Was Zacchæus an extortioner? It almost follows as a matter of course from his office. Wealth was his compensation for social ostracism. Neither his dishonest and cruel extortions nor his duty toward the poor had troubled him in the least before he saw Christ, but the moment he fell under the Master's power he saw matters in a new light. No doubt he was just as shrewd, just as enterprising in business afterwards as he was before, but he used the rewards of these talents for a nobler purpose. He gave heed that the making and the giving of money should be done in the light of the law of love.

Christianity and Business

The Romans had a god Mercury, the god of commerce, the special god not only of heralds and messengers, but of merchants and thieves. A tradesman would sprinkle himself with water from a laurel leaf before the altar of Mercury and beseech that god to look with indulgence upon his false weights and other false tricks of his trade. Hence there arose the word *mercurial,* which means not only light-hearted and fickle, but also tricky, a cheat.

There is something of the old Roman spirit in a man whose maxim is that "business is business," and therefore it cannot be conducted on Christian principles. There is a story in the Old Testament of a Syrian soldier named Naaman who was healed of leprosy by Elisha. His visit to Samaria and his contact with Elisha brought him a little knowledge of Jehovah and his ways, and he saw that the god Rimmon that he had formerly worshiped was no god at all. But when the time came for him to leave he begged Elisha for two mules' burden of earth that at his own home he might worship Jehovah on Jehovah's soil, and then said to the prophet: "In this thing Jehovah pardon thy servant: when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, when I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, Jehovah pardon thy servant in this thing."

So nominal Christians think of their place of business as a house of Rimmon, as it were; a place where they should be pardoned this and that which is not in accord with Christian principles but is, they think, necessary to their business success.

Does success in business depend on method of procedure that is not Christian? A man in Philadelphia went into a hardware store to buy a shovel. As he was examining the one handed him, he asked, "Is this a first-class shovel?" "My friend," said the hardware man, "I think you can know very little about shovels. You will notice that shovel is made by George Griffith. He is a Christian man, and makes a 'Christian' shovel, and anything you see marked with his name you may know to be first class, just what it claims to be." Such a reputation is invaluable in any business. Whatever his business, the man who is a genuine Christian will work in it as a Christian. Christ and his standards must not be excluded from the business sphere. "The purpose of the Christian religion as Jesus taught it was to help the fisherman be a better fisherman, the mother a better mother, and the merchant, the lawyer, the teacher, the mechanic, to do their work in the sight of God with a new motive and a new spirit." "If you cannot take your religion into your business, you must have a very bad business or a very poor religion."

If the Dollar Be your God

Don't you interfere with Business, be the business what it may.
Don't you interfere with Business, interference doesn't pay.
Let the sharper tempt the gudgeon with his shining, gilded lure,
Let the grafter burst his coffers with the plunder of the poor.
Live in oily, fat complaisance! Be a sweet, submissive clod!
No, don't interfere with Business—if the Dollar be your God!

—Arthur Guiterman.

Subjects for Bible Class Discussion

1. Grafters of today.
2. Can business be carried on successfully in accordance with Christian principles?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What led to the appointment of deacons? 2. What led to Stephen's arrest? 3. What was the aim of Stephen's defense? 4. How was the stoning of Stephen unlawful? (John 18.31.) 5. How does the trial and death of Stephen recall the trial and death of Christ? 6. Contrast with Stephen's words of forgiveness the dying prayer of the Old Testament martyr Zechariah, 2 Ch. 24.22. 7. What did God do for Stephen at his trial and death? 8. What was the immediate effect of Stephen's death? (Acts 8.14.)

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
HOW RELIGION CHANGES ONE'S LIFE

Beginning the Lesson

There is a pleasant fable told about Zacchæus, the hero of our lesson. In his old age every morning at sunrise he went into the fields for a walk, and he always came back with a calm and happy mind. His wife wondered where he went in his walks, but he never spoke to her of the matter. One morning she secretly followed him. He went straight to the tree from which he first saw the Lord. He took a pitcher and poured water about the tree's roots, which were getting dry in the sultry climate. He pulled up some weeds here and there. He passed his hand fondly over the old trunk. Then he looked up at the place among the branches where he had sat that day when he first saw Jesus. Then he turned away with a smile of gratitude and went back to his home. His wife asked him why he took such care of the old tree. His quiet answer was, "It was the tree which brought me to him whom my soul loveth." What is the true story connected with the tree?

Our Story Told in Africa

A missionary in South Africa tells the effect that the reading of this incident had upon one of the girls of his school. She came to him and put five sixpences into his hand, saying, "That is your money." "No," was the answer; "you do not owe me anything." "Yes, I do," said the girl, "and I will tell you how. At the public examination your promised sixpence to the one in my class who wrote the best specimen on the slate. I gave in my slate and got the sixpence, but someone else wrote the best specimen for me. Yesterday you read in church about Zacchæus, who said, 'If I have taken anything from any man, I restore him fourfold'; I took from you one sixpence, I restore you back four."

How Religion Changed a Young Man's Life

No one could honestly doubt the conversion of Zacchæus. As soon as he began to pay back the people whom he had cheated they knew that something radically good had happened to him. In Wisconsin, there is a man whose experience is somewhat similar to that of the chief of publicans, and the results are similar, too.

After his conversion the memories of past days and past deeds began to come back to the young man. God had most graciously forgiven him all his sins; but what about the people whom during those thoughtless days he had in any wise hurt by words or actions? Those things must be straightened out immediately.

He went to those neighbors and associates with whom his dealings had been most questionable and asked them what charges they might have against him. Where a positive wrong had stuck to his own memory he asked them humbly for their forgiveness; and offered to repay if he had cheated them. Perhaps his cattle had done damage; perhaps at games and dances he had caused embarrassments or had played mean tricks. He was surprised to find the people so ready to forgive him.

There were other weighty matters still waiting adjustment. He had bought some land near Tacoma, Washington, that he wished very much to see. When the Northern Pacific Railway Company advertised for laborers to go to Vancouver Island he applied, and secured passage for three dollars. When the train reached Tacoma he had matters so arranged that he was sent to the city to buy provisions for the crew. He left the train and did not return. That was deceit which he had considered quite fair, because it concerned a corporation. On inquiry at headquarters he learned that his trip occurred during an excursion season and that twenty-two dollars would make things even. This amount he sent on at once.

But some matters could not be squared that way. As a young man he had been the leader of many young fellows around him and had stood before the growing boys as a sort of ideal. It is the supreme regret of his life that his example was

so deficient. The hurt he had done to others in his merely thoughtless ways can never be wholly undone. He had told stories for the recall of which he would gladly pay hundreds of dollars; but they are still going on their evil way.

One thing the young farmer could do. He could construct. When he was selected to be superintendent of the neighborhood Sunday school he did not hesitate, for he saw his chance to build up where once he had destroyed. And in his new work every evidence speaks of the grace of God working with him.—Gerrit Verkuyl.

Two Barrels of Oysters

No one would have called Huggins, the grocer, dishonest. He, least of all the men in Caldo, would have thought of himself in such a light.

Among other attractions of his store was his oyster counter, where he opened oysters for customers to eat as they bought them. One day his clerk said to him:

"Mr. Huggins, the statement from the 'Fish Market Supply Company' this month makes no account of those two barrels of oysters that came in two weeks ago. They must have failed to enter it. Shall I write about it?"

"No, they'll think of it next time. I'm a little short this month, anyhow. Write a check for the amount of the statement. They won't be hurt if they do wait thirty days more."

When the next regular statement came it did not contain the item which had been omitted before. The clerk duly reported the fact, and Huggins said he would attend to the matter. Huggins thought about the matter frequently during the days immediately following, and repeatedly told himself he would write about those oysters, but delay succeeded delay, until two months became four, and four eight.

So the oysters went unpaid for, and after a little Huggins thought he had forgotten all about them. Then a famous gospel evangelist began a series of old-time protracted meetings. The company of seekers after Christ continued to increase. In this company was John Huggins. Night after night the grocer was on his knees at the altar rail. He rose at every service to ask for prayer. But he could not "get religion." The sense of sin was on him, but for a long time the sense of pardon never came.

John Huggins told his own story, and made his public confession not long after when he united with the Church of Christ and became a humble disciple of Jesus. Here is the story:

"Two barrels of oysters kept me away from Christ for two whole weeks. I was deeply convicted of sin, and I prayed alone, and others prayed with me, but it was of no use. When I would be on my knees I would see those two barrels between me and the back of my chair. I knew I ought to pay for them, but I was too proud to let that New York dealer know that I had really been a thief. They almost landed me in hell. One morning after I had fought all night without going to bed, I rushed down to my store before breakfast, wrote a check for the price of those two barrels and interest for two years, wrote a letter to the wholesaler telling him the whole story, and mailed that letter. As I dropped it into the letter box at the office a voice sounded in my soul, 'Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more.' Then peace such as I had never known in all my life filled me. I was forgiven. I knew I was forgiven."—Condensed from a Story by Richard Sill Holmes.

Sentence Sermons

To be a Christian is not only to think the thoughts and cherish the emotions that are Christian, but also and more emphatically to behave like a Christian.—Washington Gladden.

"Yes, 'Do no evil;' that is understood.
Now learn the harder, braver rule, 'Do good.'"

Honor Jehovah with thy substance,
And with the first-fruits of all thine increase.—Proverbs.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What do these verses tell you about Stephen: Acts 6.3, 5, 8, 10, 15; 17.55, 59, 60? 2. How did Stephen show his humility and willingness to serve? 3. How did he show that he was versed in the Scriptures? 4. How did he show serenity? 5. To what does "these things," 7.54, refer? 6. When crucified, what did Jesus say about his spirit, which Stephen's words recall? 7. What did he say about those who crucified him? 8. What does the word *martyr* mean? 9. Mention some other famous martyrs.

STEPHEN (An Early Interpreter of Christianity)

GOLDEN TEXT: They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit. Acts 6.5

LESSON Acts 6.1 to 7.60 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 53.7-12

ACTS 6.7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people. 9 But there arose certain of them that were of the synagogue called *the synagogue* of the Libertines, and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and Asia, disputing with Stephen. 10 And they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake.

7.54 Now when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. 55 But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, 56 and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. 57 But they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord; 58 and they cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *the Lord,* and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. 60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. STEPHEN THE DEACON, Acts 6.1-8. Stephen was a man of special gifts, full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, the most prominent one of the seven deacons appointed to help in the work of the early church. In addition to his task of caring for the poor, he undertook evangelistic work, and preached with great power and success, and wrought wonders and miracles among the people. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased remarkably, and even included numbers of priests.

II. STEPHEN AND HIS ENEMIES, Acts 6.9-15. Stephen became a special object of hatred to the Hellenistic (Greek-speaking) Jews, and they sought to compass his death. Among them were the Libertines, probably Jews or their descendants who had been taken to Italy by Pompey as slaves but afterwards received their freedom and were allotted a section in Rome for their residence; men of Cyrene and Alexandria in northern Africa; and men of Cilicia and Asia, provinces of Asia Minor. These men disputed with Stephen, but not being able to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke, they induced men to declare that they had heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God. Contempt of Moses was regarded as contempt of God, and an attempt to turn men from devotion to God was punishable with death according to the Jewish law (Deuteronomy 13.6-10).

After stirring up the people and the Pharisees, the elders and the scribes, his enemies siezed Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin, or Council. The false witnesses declared that Stephen continually spoke "against this holy place and the law," and declared that Jesus would destroy the temple (he probably repeated the words of Jesus recorded in John 2.19; compare the charge against Jesus, Mark 14.58) and would change the customs which Moses had given them—the laws in the Pentateuch and in the Jewish commentary, the minute laws of "the traditions of the elders." As is evident from his defense, 7.48, Stephen had taught that God could be worshiped everywhere, not in the temple alone.

And all that sat in the council, fastening their eyes on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. What was it they saw? "Certainly not some visible aureola or halo such as artists love to paint around the heads of saints. I think it was rather that unearthly beauty we have often surprised on faces we love, that strange, spiritual luminosity like a foregleam of a coming and eternal glory." His thoughts were filled with "the God of Glory," and Tennyson has truthfully expressed the source of that divine radiance:

> Looking upward, full of grace,
> He prayed, and from a happy place
> God's glory smote him on the face.

"We have met a few people like that—but only a few. So many faces today have no luster or light in them! They are downcast, shadowed, wrinkled, and lined with care, anxious, fretful. The outward glow can only come when the peace of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit."

III. STEPHEN'S DEFENSE, 7.1-53. Stephen made a long and spirited defense. He gave a masterly survey of God's dealings with his people, and showed that God's presence had not been confined to the tabernacle and temple; he had appeared to Abraham and to others, and Isaiah had taught that the worship of God was not limited to one place. The whole history which he rapidly rehearsed emphasized the fact that the Chosen People had refused the witnesses sent by God, the inference being that their repeated rejection of their great men of the past was of a piece with their rejection of Christ.

"He might have continued the story through centuries of apostasy, and shown how the leaders of the nation had perpetrated a long series of crimes against God's messengers, who called them back to their earlier faith, but apparently the apathy of his audience proved that they were following his words with no sense of their application to themselves. The sudden realization of this led him to change from his line of exposition to hurl in their face a scathing denunciation of their hypocrisy." "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears," he exclaimed, "ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of his prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed them that showed before of the coming of the Righteous One; of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers; ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not."

IV. STEPHEN THE MARTYR, 7.54-60. His enemies were furious with rage; they "gnashed on him with their teeth," their frenzy expressed itself in a brute-like grinding of their teeth.

When the members of the Sanhedrin went to the trial of Stephen they little thought, much though they hated him, that they would be gnashing their teeth at him like infuriated beasts. He who has a "hasty temper" and has not learned to keep it under control, never knows to what length it may carry him.

Stephen was undaunted. In an ecstasy of joy he proclaimed a vision, the Lord was with him, he had seen the heavens open (a familiar Jewish metaphor for insight into divine things) and the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.

"When persecution's torrent blaze
Wraps the unshrinking martyr's head,
When fades all earthly flowers and bays,
When summer friends are gone and fled,
Is he alone in that dark hour,
Who owns the Lord of love and power?" (Keble).

To drown Stephen's words and arouse the crowd to action, his enemies cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears, thereby indicating that Stephen's words were blasphemous. Then they seized him, dragged him out beyond the city walls, and stoned him. The witnesses against him, who were the first to cast stones (as the law required, Dt. 17.7), first laid their outer garments, which were in their way, at the feet of a young man named Saul. This is the first mention of Paul. Stephen called upon the Lord as they stoned him, crying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Recall Jesus' words on the cross, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." "Stephen's calm committal of his spirit to his Lord is so palpably inconsistent with the doctrine of the state of purgatory between death and the judgment, that Roman Catholic theology exempts all martyrs from purgatorial discipline" (Lyman Abbott). "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," Stephen cried with a loud voice as he "fell asleep." Recall Jesus' words on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

"What did God do for Stephen?" an infidel asked Dr. Parker, implying that if God exists he would have rescued him. "What did God do for him?" repeated Dr. Parker. "In that moment of suffering and helplessness, God enabled him to say, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.' That was what the Almighty did, and in working this miracle of forgiveness in the spirit of the martyred man, God did more

for Stephen than if he had sent a legion of angels to protect him from the ruffianism which wrought his death."

"Read it thus: 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.' Not to the charge of those who stoned him? To whose charge then? Go and ask the holy Saint Paul. Three years afterwards, praying in the temple at Jerusalem, he answered that question: 'I stood by and consented.' He answered for himself only; but the day must come when all that wicked Council that sent Stephen away to be stoned, and all that city of Jerusalem, must hold up their hands and say, 'We also, Lord—we stood by.' Ah! friends, under the simple memory of that dying saint's prayer for the pardon of his murderers is hidden the terrible truth that we all have a share in one another's sins" (George W. Cable).

Even while the persecution of Christians raged, Stephen was given an honorable burial. The persecution led to the departure of disciples from Jerusalem and to the spread of the gospel in many lands.

"So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan which moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go, not like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one that wraps the drapery of his couch
About him and lies down to pleasant dreams" (Bryant).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

They stoned him, 7.58. The method of procedure is thus described in the Talmud: After a man has been condemned to be stoned, they bring him good, strong wine, and give him to drink, that he may not feel too great horror of a violent death. Then come the witnesses, and bind his hands and feet, and lead him to the place of stoning. Then the witnesses take a great stone, large enough to cause death, and lay it upon his heart all together, lest one should act before another, according to Deuteronomy 17.7, "the hand of the witnesses shall be first against him"; then all the Israelites can overwhelm him with stones.

He fell asleep, 7.60. From very early times the Church held its martyrs in special honor, and where they could they erected chapels over their tombs. When they observed the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper they were wont to recite the names of the martyrs, after thanking God "for those who had departed this life in his faith and fear."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Time of the Stoning of Stephen

The fact that Stephen was stoned to death by the people although the procurator alone could legally inflict the death penalty suggests that the time must have been 36 or 37 A.D., when Pilate had been deposed and another procurator had not been appointed.

"He belonged to the time when the Church was made up entirely of Jews or Jewish converts, and when it can hardly be said to have been organized as we think of churches today. The fellowship to which Stephen belonged was a large group of men and women sharing a common faith and living together in most intimate ways, rather than an organized communion. They differed from their fellow-Jews in that they accepted Jesus as the Messiah, while the other Jews denied it; but this difference of opinion went deep. In the eyes of those who had rejected Jesus they were the disciples of One who had deservedly died a shameful death; on the other hand, the disciples of Jesus saw in those who rejected him those who had crucified the Messiah, misunderstood the prophets, and broken the Law. A situation so tense as this was sure to issue in persecution. For a little while after the crucifixion Jerusalem leaders had allowed the Church (if we may call it so), to live in peace, but trouble was sure to come and Stephen was the first victim of the gathering storm" (Gaius Glenn Atkins).

The Place of Stoning

It was at the regular meeting place of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem that the charge against Stephen and his defense was made, and then he was hurried outside the city walls to "the place of stoning," which according to rabbinical tradition was outside the present Damascus Gate (formerly called St. Stephen's Gate), on the hill now known as "the new Calvary," the possible site of the crucifixion of Christ. Another site east of the city and outside the gate now named in honor of the martyr is also called the place of the stoning.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Stephen's address was well thought out, orderly, progressive, logical, convincing. All aflame with zeal as he was, it must have been oratorical, eloquent, glowing. Yet his hearers listened apathetically until he made the application. It was the little word *ye, ye, ye* that aroused them.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

STEPHEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO CHRISTIANITY

Beginning the Lesson

What is said in the sixth chapter of The Acts about Stephen's character and ability? He was of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom (verse 3); a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit (verse 5); full of grace and power (verse 8); he spoke with wisdom and Spirit (verse 10). Clearly he was a remarkable man, a man great in wisdom and spiritual insight, in force of character, and in executive ability.

Stephen's Defense

It was only a question of time when one so earnest in the advocacy of a new faith should be haled to judgment. The Sanhedrin was convened to adjudicate his case. Here was Caiaphas, the high priest, in imposing pontificals; Ben-phabi, "the luxurious," notorious for shameless vices; and Issachar, wearing the proverbial silk gloves that hid his deformed hands. It was a degenerate body of mitred dignitaries. In their midst stood Stephen. Alone? No, not alone; for, as in the fiery furnace of Babylon, there was One with him "like unto the Son of God."

The indictment was in two counts. First, he was charged with having spoken against the Levitical law. Guilty! He had repeatedly declared that the Levitical law was only a schoolmaster leading to Christ; since the types and symbols all pointed forward to him. Second, he was charged with speaking against the temple. Guilty, again! He knew that the temple and its furnishings contained naught but foregleams of Christ. These were the things which Stephen believed and must therefore preach.

At the beginning of his defense he spoke in calm and measured tones. A dull and prosy résumé of history it must have been to some. As he proceeded with his defense, showing how the Jews had rejected the prophets and their prophecies, he rose above himself, reaching such self-forgetful exaltation that his face seemed to shine like an angel's. Expecting no mercy, he was not afraid. The thought of the blind fatuity of these religious leaders overwhelmed him. He had thus far seemed like an athlete gathering himself for a supreme effort. The rabbis sat before him angry and impatient. Then, on a sudden, the prisoner at the bar cast prudence to the winds and his defense became a terrific accusation of his judges: "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears," he cried, "ye do always resist the Spirit of God! As your fathers did, so do ye. They persecuted those who foresaw your Messiah, so do ye. They haled to judgment and death those who have led them in the path of righteousness, so do ye! And now that your Messiah has appeared, ye with wicked hands have crucified and slain him!"

It is not surprising that they "gnashed on him with their teeth."—David James Burrell.

Stephen Was the First to See and Declare that Christianity Had Superseded Judaism

He not only bore witness to Jesus as the Christ, but he dared to proclaim that the Crucified and Risen Christ was the fulfillment of the earlier dispensation, that

his coming meant the overthrow of Judaism. Jesus had taken the place of the temple and the sacrifices and the priesthood, because he himself was the atonement for sin, the way unto God. The new wine must burst the old bottles.

His defense is a marvel of insight. "In after years Paul followed the same lines of argument and exposition. It was the first attempt to read the story of God's dealings with Israel in the light of Christ. It was the earliest attempt to link the Old Testament with the New. It may be called the fragmentary draft of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Stephen's eyes were opened to see that the old covenant, which had dated from the days of Abraham, was nigh to vanishing away, and was being superseded by that better hope, through which all men might draw nigh to God."

Stephen's Preaching Opened the Door for Gentiles

It was no accident that expansion dated from Stephen's martyrdom, that his blood was thus the seed of the wider Church. Though not a word had been said by Stephen touching Gentiles, the spirit of legalism and ceremonialism which was the real barrier between Jew and Gentile was broken through by his large ideas of God and his graciousness.—Vernon Bartlet.

Stephen's Soul Goes Marching On

It is safe to say that the mob supposed that Stephen was dead. No doubt Saul of Tarsus reported to the Sanhedrin, "We have silenced that pestilent fellow." At the next meeting in the upper room the disciples made lamentation over him. But Stephen was not dead; he had just begun to live.

His enthusiastic devotion to Christ spread like a contagion among the other disciples. Up to that time, heedless of the Master's word, "Go ye, evangelize," they had remained in Jerusalem like a covey of frightened birds: but now they went perforce "scattered abroad everywhere, preaching the word." And wherever they went revivals followed and souls were converted. The great propaganda had begun and nothing thenceforth could arrest it. "Bring forth the ax! Kindle the fagots! The Christians to the lions!" But the more they were hunted, the more they multiplied.

And still the work goes on. It is as if every missionary ship that sails to the regions beyond had Stephen's name on its pennant. The voice that was hushed in the hall Gazith is heard along the ages. Stephen's soul goes marching on.—David James Burrell.

We Owe Paul to Stephen

Paul saw the light on Stephen's face—as if it had been the face of an angel. He saw the poise and calm and peace that possessed Stephen's soul, such as he himself had longed for but had never experienced. He listened to Stephen's address, and realized all its implications, and although he did not relent in the least from his first purpose to put down what he thought heresy, he little realized the strong impression those words were producing on his mind. Outside the city walls Paul stood consenting to Stephen's death, and holding the clothes of those who hurled the stones. Little did he realize then that he was to be Stephen's successor, to become the apostle to the Gentiles which Stephen would have become had he lived. He must have carried away in his memory the dying words of Stephen, and pondered them and his address as he journeyed towards Damascus, and thus they prepared him for his surrender to the Master whom Stephen served. Stephen was undoubtedly the chief human agent in the conversion of Paul.

"As when a standard-bearer falls and another seizes the standard and presses on, so Saul of Tarsus catching up to the word of Stephen went everywhere preaching. 'This Jesus is the Christ!' He was not disobedient to his heavenly vision. He crossed the seas, traversed the deserts, climbed the mountains with his message; and the life of the proto-martyr was perpetuated in him. Every journey he made was Stephen's journey; every word he spoke was in continuance of Stephen's word. The love of truth, courage of conviction and patience of consecration which had been so conspicuous in Stephen's life, were redoubled in the ministry of Paul. The Gospel flamed from his lips until, pursuing the crimson path of the proto-martyr, he laid his head upon the block and followed him."

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.—Tertullian.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Read all three accounts of Paul's conversion: Acts 9.3-9; 22.6-21; 26.9-20, and compare 1 Cor. 15.8, 9; 2 Cor. 11.32, 33; Gal. 1.13-17; 1 Tim. 1.12-16. 2. In what frame of mind did Paul set out for Damascus? 3. What may have been the effect upon Paul of Stephen's words and spirit? 4. Why were followers of Christ called "of the Way"? 5. Upon what did Paul base his claim to be an apostle? (1 Cor. 9.1.) 6. Must everyone go through a sudden experience analogous to that of Paul in order to have assurance of conversion? 7. What is the nature of conversion? 8. What is the effect of conversion?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

STANDING UP FOR CHRIST

Beginning the Lesson

From very early times when the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed, Christians were wont to recite the names of the martyrs after thanking God "for those who had departed this life in his faith and fear." The day on which a martyr died was celebrated as his birthday. "St. Stephen's birthday," they called the day of his stoning, "for," said they, "was it not for him a birth into a better life?"

We study today the martyrdom of Stephen, but this is not all that the Bible tells us about him. What is our first information in regard to him? (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

Calm amidst the Storm

Stephen's countenance was lighted up with the divine radiance all the while that he was making his defense and afterwards during the stormy scene of his martyrdom. Ships at sea during a cyclone, or circular storm, sometimes come into the calm center round which the storm revolves, and find the water there placid and unruffled; and the sailors call this "the eyes of the hurricane." Stephen was such on that day in the Sanhedrin. When the court became a mob of murderers and rushed upon him with one wild yell, he alone continued calm, and still wore the angel-face.—Charles Jerdan.

Stephen — *Philip de Champaigne*

How Stephen Died

Heber's face was unusually grave as he entered his home one evening, and his voice and touch were unusually gentle as he kissed Ruth and lifted his little son Davie upon his knee. He did not speak to Rachel, his wife, and she waited upon him in silence.

"Rachel," said he at last, "I have seen a brave man die."

Rachel caught her breath. "Not—Stephen?" she asked.

"Aye, Stephen."

"How did he die?" asked Rachel.

"Stoned," answered the husband shortly. "It was a riotous proceeding. There was no law nor justice about it. They had him up before the Council and brought false witnesses to swear that he had blasphemed God and Moses!"

"But he had not," said Rachel indignantly.

Heber hesitated. "He had said what some called blasphemy," replied he. "He had said that the crucified Jesus was the Son of God, and had implied that the law of Moses would in time become of no importance beside the law of Jesus the Christ."

"Made Stephen no defense?"

"Aye, he made a defense! Maybe he knew it was his last chance to speak for the Master, for he made the most of it! And they listened, Rachel—they listened! I wish that thou hadst seen his face there in the hall. 'Twas as the face of an angel. Even the High Priest observed it, and at the last before they pulled him down Stephen cried out, 'I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!' Then they dragged him forth out of the city!"

"Did he—suffer long?"

"Nay, 'twas soon over. He knelt and prayed the Lord Jesus to forgive his murderers."—Grace Winter, in The Sunday School Chronicle.

Why Stephen Dared to Stand Up for Jesus

Stephen knew what he believed about Christ and he believed it with all his mind and heart. There was no latent suspicion which made him reluctant or hesitant to act in full accord with his convictions. He knew what was true and right, and as an honest man he had only one course of action open to him. That was to do what was true and right, let the consequences be what they might. We say of such and such a man that "he has the courage of his convictions," by which we mean that he acts in accordance with them without regard to the results.

These convictions of Stephen's were the deepest and most driving convictions that a man could have. He believed that Christ was the Son of God and his personal Lord and Master, and that in Christ he had found the supreme crown of all the life and history of Israel. All that the nation existed for, the whole problem of life and duty, found consummation and completion in Christ. In comparison with him nothing else was worth while. Anger, hate, abuse, and death were trifles in comparison with the great reality and supremacy of Christ. All sources of cowardice and timidity simply did not exist for a man to whom Christ was what he was to Stephen.

The trouble with Christians today is moral fear. They do not want to be considered peculiar. There is perhaps for them a little unreality in witnessing for Christ by an occasional word when there may be whole areas of their life in which Christ is unfamiliar, or perhaps they have no clear and worth-while witness to bear. These are the sources of their lack of courage. There was no such moral fear in Stephen. Christ was to him the greatest of all realities and he spoke naturally and fearlessly and unhesitatingly. He had the courage which all men have who know the truth and love to speak the truth.—Condensed from an Article in the Westminster Teacher, by Robert E. Speer.

A Sailor Determined to Stand Up for Christ

At the close of a prayer meeting among sailors a young seaman, who only a few nights before had been converted, came up to the leader and requested him to write a few words upon a blank card, "Because," he said, "you will do it more plainly than I can." "What must I write?" said my friend. "Write these words, sir: 'I love Jesus—do you?'"

After he had written them my friend said, "Now, you must tell me what you are going to do with the card." He replied, "I am going to sea tomorrow, and I am afraid if I do not take a stand at once I may begin to be ashamed of my religion and let myself be laughed out of it altogether. Now as soon as I go on board, I shall walk straight to my bunk and nail up this card upon it, that everyone may know that I am a Christian, and may give up all hope of making me either ashamed or afraid of adhering to the Lord."—Unknown.

A Lesson from Frances Ridley Havergal

Miss Havergal tells of going away to boarding school shortly after she had united

with the church. When she entered the school she learned that among all the hundred girls she was the only Christian. Her first feeling was one of dread. She could not confess Christ before gay and worldly girls; but her second thought was that she could not but confess Christ. "I am the only one he has here," she said. This thought strengthened her, and she was abundantly rewarded in her witnessing for him.

Long afterwards she wrote a hymn of which this is the first stanza:

Have you not a word for Jesus? Some, perchance, while you are dumb,
Wait and weary for your message, hoping you will bid them "Come."
Will you cast away the gladness thus your Master's joy to share,—
All because a word for Jesus seems too much for you to dare?

Taking a Dare

The other day a boy was talking about his friend. "He's very brave," he said; "he never refuses a dare. At his office they dared him to touch the electric fan, so he did; and his finger was hurt so badly that they had to fetch the doctor. And once they dared him at home to go out with his coat turned inside out, his hat all battered, with odd boots on, and a tea tray fastened at the back of him so that it clattered at every step. He started, and he'd have done it, too, only they wouldn't let him. He never refuses a dare."

"And is he one of the people who dare to do right, no matter what other people say, dare to be true, no matter what the temptation is?"

"Oh, well," said the boy, "that sort of daring is different."

It is: it is very different—much harder, and much more worth while. A "dare" is a cheap and popular way of getting a reputation among your own crowd; it doesn't bring you any real credit, or the respect of anyone whose opinion is really important. But daring to do right, in spite of all odds—that needs lion-like courage, that helps the cause of God.

Stephen had that sort of courage. He was perfectly fearless when he spoke about Jesus. He would not give in when he was threatened with death. He simply flung bold, outspoken, truth-telling words at his persecutors and defied them. He died triumphantly, victoriously, and we honor him still.

The young man who was minding the stone-throwers' coats and cloaks was brave and high-spirited; he could appreciate courage. He looked on amazed; perhaps he said to himself: "This is a brave man; he has got hold of something that makes him defy death. . . . He says he sees—what? Jesus alive? How dare he talk like that when he's just about to die? Yet his face looks more like the face of an angel than the face of a liar!" And the young persecutor began to think about the young martyr, and his thoughts pricked him like goads, until he surrendered to Stephen's Savior, and, like Stephen, became "bold as a lion" for Christ's sake.

We all admire righteous boldness and noble courage. I wonder if we are all really bold when it comes to a chance of daring to be true to the right, true to Christ. Are we like lions, then, or are we more like—mice?—M. Jennie Street.

Sentence Sermons

Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.—Jesus.

Blessed are those who die for God,
And earn the martyr's crown of light,
Yet who lives for God may be
A greater conqueror in his sight.—Adelaide Anne Procter.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. How far is Damascus from Jerusalem? 2. What did Paul say about his persecution of the Christians, as recorded in Acts 26.9, 10? 3. Did he obey his conscience? 4. What was the trouble? 5. Must everyone, like Paul, go through a sudden experience in order to accept Jesus as his Savior? 6. How was Zacchæus led to Jesus? 7. How was the centurion led to Jesus? 8. Recall the quiet, deliberate way in which the Ethiopian officer on the way to Gaza was led to accept Jesus as his Savior: was he as truly converted as was Paul? 9. Have you accepted Jesus as your Savior?

SAUL OF TARSUS (How a Pharisee Became a Christian)

GOLDEN TEXT: I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ. Philippians 3.8

LESSON Acts 22.3-15 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 6.1-8

ACTS 22.3 I am a Jew, born in Tarsus or Cilicia, but brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, even as ye all are this day: 4 and I persecuted this Way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. 5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and journeyed to Damascus to bring them also that were there unto Jerusalem in bonds to be punished. 6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and drew nigh unto Damascus, about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. 7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. 9 And they that were with me beheld indeed the light, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. 10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. 11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me I came into Damascus. 12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well reported of by all the Jews that dwelt there, 13 came unto me, and standing by me said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And in that very hour I looked up on him. 14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know his will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from his mouth. 15 For thou shalt be a witness for him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. PAUL'S BIRTHPLACE AND EDUCATION, verse 3. See The Historical Background. Paul had been charged with being an enemy of the Jews and their laws, and he began by declaring that he was a Jew through and through, born in Tarsus of Cilicia but educated in Jerusalem, having been taught by the great Rabbi Gamaliel "according to the strict law of our fathers," and that he was as zealous for God as they all now were. An ancient tradition says that Paul's parents went to Tarsus from their early home in Northern Galilee whence they were driven out by an insurrection. Gamaliel was a member of the Sanhedrin (Acts 5.34-40), a very learned Rabbi, of whom it was said at his death that "the glory of the Law has ceased."

II. THE ARRESTER ARRESTED, verses 6-9. In his zeal Paul had persecuted those of the Way, he told the mob in Jerusalem (see The Historical Background), binding and sending men and women to prison. The high priests and the elders could bear witness that he had received letters giving him authority to make arrests, and armed with these he had started for Damascus that he might bring back to Jerusalem for punishment the followers of Christ whom he might find there.

" 'The Way'—the name had in it the suggestion of ceaseless motion. The Christianity of the beginning history of the Church never was at rest. It was on the road, on the way to wider influence and to better things. On foot, on horseback, on camel back, on shipboard, it was always on the go. It was persistently itinerant, always pressing on to some farther goal. Then the Christians had a way of doing things which was an entirely new way to the world of that day. It was a new way of thought, a new way of speech, a new way of life. The Christians were called 'those who belong to the Way.' Christianity did not seem to the believers to be a creed, a philosophy, a society, a nationality, so much as it was a way of thinking, speaking, acting. A Christian was known by the way he had of looking at life, its duties and responsibilities" (D. A. Hayes).

The letters which Paul carried were addressed to the synagogues (Acts 9.2), for those of the Way had not yet separated themselves from the Jewish synagogues. Only within the limits of Judea had the Sanhedrin any direct authority, but its orders were regarded as binding over every Jewish community. "The extent to

which this obligation prevailed depended on the dispositions of the Jewish communities towards the Sanhedrin." Large numbers of Jews lived at Damascus: in the tumult under Nero ten thousand were put to death.

"With the ambition which knows no rest, and in the pride of his Pharisee's heart, Paul strikes out with the idea to reverse the maxim of the Crucified Leader of the hated sect, and go into all the world and suppress the gospel in every creature" (Henry Drummond).

Paul's conscience was void of offense toward God when as Saul the Pharisee he persecuted the Christians. You are familiar with the saying that conscience is like a sun-dial. When the truth shines on it, it points the right way, but it may be covered up so that no truth can fall on it, or false light may fall on it, and then it leads one astray. The owner of the sun-dial must see that it receives the true light, and so must the owner of the conscience.

Paul was very near Damascus, after a journey of one hundred and fifty miles, when suddenly at noon an extraordinary light shone round about him and he fell to the ground. David Smith recalls in this connection the terrific thunder storm which overtook Martin Luther in the Thuringian Forest and Luther's dedicating himself to God's service at the moment when a bolt of lightning killed his friend beside him. In 1 Corinthians 9.1, Paul tells us that within the light he saw Jesus himself, in his risen, glorified body. To him the Risen Christ came as he came to the eleven apostles during the forty days after the resurrection: this was the ground on which he claimed equal authority with the other apostles: see 1 Corinthians 15.8; 2 Corinthians 11.5; Galatians 2.8; Acts 22.21. What sort of vision was it? "The answer to the question will vary according to a man's conception of the universe. The question has no existence for faith. Faith knows that what happened, happened in any case because God chose to work it thus—whether Paul really beheld Jesus in the light; or whether it was merely a visionary sight."

Voice and answer followed. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" "Who art thou, Lord?" "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest." Saul was Paul's Hebrew name. In persecuting the followers of Jesus he had been persecuting Jesus himself. Those with him saw the light but did not hear the voice, Paul tells us. In Acts 9.7 we are told that they heard the voice but saw no one, which may be explained as a hearing of sound but not of words.

"Paul, himself, does not appear to have taken his own experience as a standard of conversion. He told the story of it in his own defense, but his ordinary preaching appears to have kept it in the background. There is little if any evidence that he demanded striking conversion phenomena in others, or that he commonly witnessed them in his converts" (George Albert Coe).

III. INSTANT OBEDIENCE, verses 10, 11. "What shall I do, Lord?" was Paul's humble question. He believed in the Christ. He had instantly turned from a persecutor to a follower, and given himself to his new Master's service. To know what Christ would have him do became thereafter the one desire of his heart, for he was the bond-servant of Christ; to him to live was Christ.

"Was Saul's conversion really as sudden as it looked?" Dr. J. D. Jones questions. "The vision on the way to Damascus was the explosion that laid Paul's Pharisaism in ruins, but who can read the seventh chapter of Romans, with its story of spiritual conflict, with its record of Paul's discovery of the inability of the law to bring him the righteousness he craved for, without seeing that God had for years been 'laying the train'—preparing Paul for the mighty change?"

"Arise, and go into Damascus," was the answer. There he would learn what he was to do. The glory of the light had blinded him, and he was led by the hand like a little child.

IV. COMMISSIONED, verses 12-15. There in Damascus Ananias, a devout and highly esteemed man, came to Paul and called him Brother. "Brother Saul," he said, "receive thy sight." And Paul looked up and saw him. It was God who had given him this vision and message, Ananias told him, and he was to be a witness for Christ unto all men.

"To Paul himself his conversion was the most real event of his whole life. All else was, in comparison, shadow and semblance. There on the way to Damascus

he had enjoyed a brief vision of the truth, the divine reality. He had seen God, and spoken with him. His earthly self had been permitted for a brief space to become aware of the omnipresent God, who is everywhere around us, and who sometimes permits certain mortals of finer mould and more sentient nature, his chosen prophets, to hear his voice. He had not room in his nature for even the thought of disbelieving or questioning. He had seen the Jesus that he had fancied to be a dead impostor; he had recognized that he was living; he knew that he was God. There was no more to be said, what remained was—to act" (William M. Ramsay). And no other Christian ever strove to follow more closely in the steps of his Lord, or did more to witness for him and extend his Kingdom, than did Paul.

We need not question our own spiritual experiences because they differ from those of others. But if we have acceptd Christ as our Savior and have dedicated ourselves to his service, we need occasionally to ask ourselves whether we are witnessing for him as fully as possible in our lives as Christians.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

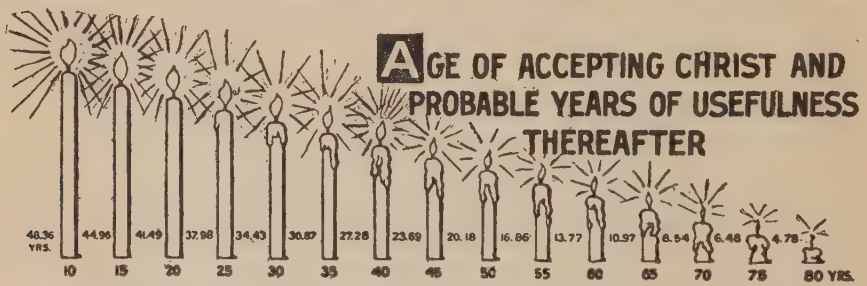
The Occasion of Paul's Speech

On Paul's last visit to Jerusalem, whither he went with contributions for the poor which had been given by the churches he had founded among the Gentiles, he was seen walking the streets with Trophimus, a Greek from Ephesus. When later he was seen in the temple with four men, Jews, for whose purification vows he had paid, Jewish enemies from Asia asserted that he had defiled the holy temple by bringing Greeks (Gentiles) into it. He was seized by a mob and would have been killed had not the chief captain of the Roman guard rescued him. As he was being led up the stairs to the Castle of Antonia he begged permission to speak to the mob. His speech is our lesson text.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

There were several routes which Paul could take from Jerusalem to Damascus, but the quickest and most traveled ran directly north to Shechem, and then inclining to the east around the shores of the Sea of Galilee led straight to Damascus, a journey of six or eight days on horseback. Pharisees seldom used horses, and Paul may have ridden an ass or a mule.

Damascus, the capital city of Syria, is traditionally the oldest city in the world. Josephus declares that it was founded by Uz, the grandson of Shem. We first



hear of it in Abraham's time. It has a fine situation on a fertile plain at the foot of the Anti-Lebanon Mountains, on the highway of traffic with the East. It is called by the natives of today the "Silver Spoon," because of its shape and appearance in the midst of luxurious vegetation. Through it run the clear waters of the Barada River, the Abana of Naaman's day.

The Street called Straight was in Paul's day a beautiful avenue one hundred feet wide, running directly through the city from east to west, and divided by Corinthian columns into three roadways. It is still the widest and most important thoroughfare of the city, but it makes several turns and, roofed over and lined with shops as it now is, it is a seemingly endless arcade.

Of course the scenes connected with Paul are located and shown to credulous

visitors. Over the gateway of a courtyard there is the inscription "San Ananias Domus," The House of St. Ananias, and within the courtyard a subterranean grotto, used by the Franciscans as a chapel, has altars and pictures representing the vision and the baptism of Paul. Tradition long located the scene of Paul's conversion six miles southwest of the city, but now a site more convenient for visitors is shown not far from a house on the city wall credited with being the one from which Paul escaped in a basket (Acts 9.25).

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

With many pupils, especially with those living in Christian homes and under good influences in church and church school, the love of God and their neighbors becomes imperceptibly a part of their lives: their Christian life begins simply and quietly. With pupils who have made no conscious decision for Christ, teachers have the opportunity today to press home the reality and the need of a conscious turning to Christ. Careful and prayerful study will enable a teacher so to present the claims of Christ as to win immediate response. In adult classes the leader's constant objective will be to make the class a place where God may find hearts responsive to his call.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

CONVERSION: ITS NATURE AND EFFECT

Beginning the Lesson

In Adolf Deismann's thought-provoking book entitled Paul: a Study in Social and Religious History, he writes as follows about the great event which made Paul the Pharisee into Paul the Christian:

"An experience, which Paul regarded as caused by God, which meant the revelation of the living Christ taking inner possession of him, and which included in itself both an inner transformation and the call to the Apostolate of the before-time persecutor—that was the occurrence in Damascus for Paul himself. And this characterization of the conversion is amply sufficient for the historian. For the man who describes his position as a Christian with the phrase: 'Christ lives in me,' Damascus was the beginning of that indwelling of Christ: 'God revealed his Son in me.'

"The conversion of the persecutor into a follower and of the Pharisee Apostle into the Apostle of Christ was a sudden one. Yet it was no magic transformation, but had its psychological preparation both negative and positive. Negative in the experiences which the soul of the young Pharisee had gone through in its passionate hunger for righteousness under the yoke of the Law. Positive through the prophetic inwardness of the Old Revelation and through a relatively close touch with the genuine tradition of Jesus and with the effects wrought by him in the characters of the confessors whom Paul persecuted.

"I do not regard it as probable that the young zealot was ever personally acquainted with the earthly Jesus, but it is most certainly probable that the Pharisee was acquainted with his opponent through his words and the influence he continued to exert on his disciples.

"So the lightning of Damascus strikes no empty space, but finds deep in the soul of the persecutor plenty of inflammable material. We see the flame blaze upwards, and after a generation we can still feel that the glow then kindled has lost none of its power in the man grown old: Christ is in Paul, Paul in Christ."

Conversion: Its Nature and Effect

What is the nature of conversion? (After the members of the class have given their own opinions, read to them the following by Bishop Francis J. McConnell in The Construction Quarterly.)

In its essentials the doctrine of conversion has been practically unchanged from its earliest statements. By conversion teachers of all religious schools have meant the change wrought in a human life by the Divine Spirit in response to the surrender of the individual will. The differences between varying phrasings of the doctrine have come out of varying degrees of emphasis of the divine or the human factor. A believer with a marked leaning toward the old Calvinism is likely to conceive of conversion as so exclusively the work of God that the soul seems seized and carried into the Kingdom of God almost without its own consent. At

the other extreme are those who think of conversion as simply a resolution on a man's part to be better. Between these contrasting views is the conception of the main mass of Christian believers who think of the conversion of a life as a change resulting from the interworking of the human and the divine will. A man is going in the wrong direction. He faces about and the divine forces help him to travel aright. Or a man is fettered by evil habits and determines to break from them, depending upon prayer and devotion to a religious ideal. Or a life has been weakened by sin; the sinner abandons his sin, looking to the healing influences of the Divine Presence. Or to keep more closely to the suggestiveness of the word of Jesus as to the new birth—with its hint of the intense vitality of spiritual processes —a life is born into a new world by responding to the influences which come upon it from that world. The Spirit of God broods over human lives until they come to strength which enables them to break through the shell of their own self-life into the large outside, or to push upward to realms beyond anything they have known.

The Two Ways

Some find themselves met and challenged by a voice not of their own lips. They are called out, as surely as the net-menders were, to follow the Christ whose love reaches them as a present fact. They seem to pass, by his help, from death to life, from darkness to light. Everything alters, the whole world seems changed and made new. They enter a new stage of existence, and they seem to have emerged by a new birth into a higher way of living. Something of God, something from above, seems to have been added to their natural self—and so, indeed, it has been. These are consciously "twice-born" souls. Are they of a higher spiritual order than the souls who cross the great divide and do not know it? Not necessarily so. They are probably more intense, more dynamic, more convicting in their influence—but not more completely saved and not, I surmise, any more precious to the Heavenly Father. Any way that makes a soul Christlike, Godlike, is a good way, and therefore is orthodox. Some souls leap from one level of life to another; others go the slow, spiral way up. But none goes from sin to glory without God and his grace; and when anyone arrives there, with the new name and the shining mark on his forehead, he will be met with the joyful words: "My son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found." And that is enough.—Rufus M. Jones, in The World Within.

Our Souls No more Resemble One Another than Do Our Bodies

During his last illness Drummond remarked that, at the age of twelve, he made a conscientious study of Bonar's God's Way of Peace. "I fear," he said, "that the book did me more harm than good. I tried to force my inner experience into the mould represented by that book, and it was impossible." In one of Moody's after-meetings in London, Drummond was dealing with a young girl who was earnestly seeking the Savior. At last he startled her by exclaiming, "You must give up reading James' Anxious Enquirer." She wondered how he had guessed that she had been reading it; but he had detected from her conversation that she was making his own earlier mistake. She was trying to think as John Angell James thought, to weep as he wept, and to find her way to faith precisely as he found his. Drummond told her to read nothing but the New Testament, and, he said later on, "A fortnight of that put her right!"

There lies the whole secret. Our souls no more resemble each other than our bodies; they are not made in a mould and turned out by the million. No two are alike. Ready-made clothes will never exactly fit. Bonar and James, Bunyan and Law, Doddridge and Wesley, Muller and Spurgeon, may help me amazingly. They may help me by showing me how they—each for himself—found their way into the presence of the Eternal and, like Christian at the Palace Beautiful, were robed and armed for pilgrimage. But if they lead me to suppose that I must experience their sensations, enjoy their relations, pass through their depressions, struggle and laugh and weep and sing just as they did, they have done me serious damage. They have led me away from those secret chambers in which the King adorns the soul in beautiful and comely garments, and they have left me a mere wearer of ready-made clothes.—F. H. Boreham, in Mushrooms on the Moor.

There are so Many Sorts of Conversion

It is conversion when the faithless soul believes; and it is conversion when a little faith becomes a larger faith. It is conversion when bad men become good

men; and it is conversion when good men become better men. It is conversion when the hands that hang down are lifted up; and when the lame and erring feet are turned back into the way. It is conversion when the business standards of the world are exchanged for higher and more human standards; and when the decision to do the brave and honorable thing forces itself within a worldly mind.—Charles S. Horne, in The Romance of Preaching.

The Effects of Conversion

Conversion means, or ought to mean, just as much conversion of life as it does conversion of soul. Unless it does this, it cannot be very genuine or go very deep. And, furthermore, there is a very beautiful sense in which it may mean conversion of hard and troublesome and even sad and bitter things into blessedness and character. There is a tree illustration that brings out this truth very strikingly. The Arabs have a parable about the palm tree that, while it stands with its feet in the brackish, undrinkable water of the desert, lifts its head toward the sun. They cannot drink the salt water about its roots, but they tap the tree and drink the wholesome and thirst-quenching palm wine. Thus the tree converts even the unfavorable and unkindly elements of its environment into a product of blessing.

So it should be—and, thank God! it generally is—with the true Christian, the true convert. He does not stop with the beneficent change in his own soul, or even the better utilization of the kindly elements of life, but by the grace of Jesus Christ changes even the hard and seemingly unbearable things into blessings and helps. He converts life itself, in its most unfavorable aspects, into good. He is a veritable palm tree in the desert for multitudes of human pilgrims.

What an inspiring aspect such a conception is to the simple matter of personal conversion! How really significant the process, how wide-reaching in influence and results! Not only may a great change in one's inner self take place, but that change may be productive of large and wide objective changes in life, changes that affect others and hasten on the coming of God's kingdom. Every Christian has a right to rejoice in the wider interpretation of personal conversion.—James Buckham.

"Conversion" for Death, but not for Life

The chaplain of a prison found a man who was condemned to death very anxious, convicted, spiritually alarmed. The chaplain's instructions all bore upon the power of the Redeemer to save to the uttermost; and it seemed as if the message were received, and the man were a believer. Meanwhile the chaplain had come to think that there was a ground for appeal from the death-sentence; he placed the matter before the proper authorities; and with success. On his next visit, very cautiously and by way of mere suggestions and surmises, he led the apparently resigned criminal towards the possibility of a commutation. What would he say, how would his repentance stand, if his life were granted him? The answer soon came. Instantly the prisoner divined the position; asked a few decisive questions; then threw his Bible across the cell, and, civilly thanking the chaplain for his attentions, told him that he had no further need of him, nor of his Book.—H. C. G. Moule.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. A Study of Paul's conversation. See Chapter V of The Ideal Life, by Henry Drummond; Chapter III of Conybeare and Howson's Life of Paul; Chapter IV of Paterson-Smyth's St. Paul's Life and Letters.

2. Do you agree with the headmaster of a famous English school that the great moral and spiritual alternative is really decided for most boys and girls in their first eight years of life in the home, and that conversions which take place in the teens are due to the influences of those early years?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Why does Paul recall Timothy's tears? 2. What did Paul mean by his counsel in verse six? 3. How early should children's religious training begin? 4. How should it begin? 5. What responsibility have parents for the religious training of their children?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WHAT IT MEANS TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

Beginning the Lesson

What part had Paul in Stephen's death? He held the garments of those who

stoned him, but was that all? He was consenting unto his death, he approved of it, and probably urged on the mob.

What was Paul's next act? He did everything he could to put an end to Jesus' influence on earth. He thought that those who followed Jesus—those of the Way, as they were called—were disobeying God. He did not know Jesus. He thought that Jesus had claimed to be what he was not, and that he was dead and buried and that was his end. He could not become a Christian until he knew Jesus as Stephen knew him, knew him as his Savior, know that he had risen from the dead and is alive for ever more.

All this Paul learned on the way to Damascus. Where is Damascus? What sort of city was it? Why was Saul going there? He honestly thought that he was using all his zeal and energy and perseverance and power in God's service. God had to show him that he was utterly wrong.

Paul *Raphael*

In your drills at school when you are marching straight ahead and the leader suddenly calls out, "About face!" what happens? You turn halfway around, and then when he calls "March!" you go off in the opposite direction. That is what happened to Saul. He was going steadily ahead in the wrong course; God suddenly made him see that he was headed wrong, and that he must about face. How was this brought about?

Saul was honest in thinking he was doing what God wanted him to do when he tried to put an end to Christianity. He thought he ought to do it, and what he ought to do he always did whatever the cost. There was a time when good people who lived in Salem, Massachusetts, believed in witches. They believed that some men and women were in league with evil powers and wrought harm to others by strange means, that they stuck pins into sleeping babies, and caused farm animals to die, and so on, and in one year these good people had twenty-one innocent men and women put to death as witches. Paul was like these Salem people in wanting the followers of Christ put to death.

Then suddenly as he neared Damascus there came a blinding light, a light brighter than the noonday sun, and Saul heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" "Who art thou, Lord?" cried Saul in his astonishment. "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest," came the answer. Jesus was alive, then, and in persecuting his followers Saul had been persecuting him. "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me," Jesus had taught his disciples in his talk about the Judgment, you remember, and this is what Paul learned that day as he lay prostrated on the ground on his memorable trip to Damascus. He learned to know Jesus the Christ. He learned that Jesus is alive, and that what he did to Jesus' followers he was doing to Jesus. Paul was led blinded into Damascus, and for three days he thought about that vision and what it meant. It meant to him that he must about face in the way he was thinking, and he did. Ever after that he was Christ's most devoted follower.

All Do not Have Paul's Experience

As an illustration showing that one can be a Christian without experiencing a sudden conversion like Paul's, or without enduring days of anguish and nights of

tears and agony such as Bunyan passed through, Dr. N. D. Hillis gave the following:

Among the mountains of the Adirondacks there is a beautiful lake called Placid, and on one side of the lake there is a high precipice with springs in the crevasses, and with mud all over the ledges. Last summer a little child, disobeying its parents, climbed up the side of the rocks, slipped over a boulder, fell upon a ledge covered with slime and spring water, and was carried to the hotel having suffered grievous injury. For days and weeks the child rehearsed the story of its fall, and its marvelous deliverance therefrom. But there was another little companion that kept within the appointed limits. Now, what if this second child, having listened to the deliverance that came to his companion, had longed for a similar marvelous experience, and often commented upon the fact that he had never been delivered from the peril of a heavy fall on the rocks, and that, since he had never fallen in the mire and had his garments washed, he very much doubted whether he had any right to be happy, or indeed whether or not he was alive and at Lake Placid at all?

What it Means for a Child to Become a Christian

The current idea of the churches, which has only just begun to be dislodged, that adult conversion is the type and intended rule of Christianity, comes largely from the fact that the first preachers of Christianity had of necessity to be largely occupied with men who had known nothing of Christianity in their youth. Peter and Paul had to go to grown men and ask them to begin Christian life. But surely that was not to be the perpetual picture of Christian culture.

A child's religion is no monstrous thing. It is no priggish and unpleasant aping of what is possible only for the maturer life. It is a true child who loves God and sees everything beautiful in him, who loves the Church and finds its ways and forms full of significance and pleasure, and who hears and accepts as part of the story of the world which it is gradually learning to know, the story of how God loved that world, so that he came into it and lived here and died here, to help every man to live in holiness and to save every man when he falls into sin. There is no child for whom that religion is impossible. Brave, true, frank, gentle, joyous, what is better than this in the labored religion of our later days? It is not only a promise, it is a present reality. The boy is not only a little man, he is a boy, with his own present capacity of character. He is even now "a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven."—Condensed from Visions and Tasks, by Phillips Brooks.

The Converted Cactus

The cactus plant grows on our western desert lands where nothing else will grow. It has long, sharp thorns, and everyone gives it a wide berth. But Luther Burbank, the famous botanist of California, thought he would try to change this worse than useless plant into a good and useful one. He began his experiments with it, and succeeded in raising a cactus plant without any spines. Now the farmers are eager to have this transformed cactus (this converted cactus, we might call it), because it grows without any cultivation, gets along with very little rainfall, and cows and pigs and chickens eat it and like it and thrive on it.

There are some prickly, thorny boys and girls whose rough ways, quarrelsomeness, selfishness, make them unpleasant to live with, and others try to keep away from them. These boys and girls can be transformed, converted, too. They will lose all their disagreeable traits if they love and obey Jesus.

Sentence Sermons

To become a Christian is to accept and serve Christ as one's Savior and King.

Jesus, Master, whom I serve,
Though so feebly and so ill,
Strengthen hand and heart and nerve
All thy bidding to fulfill.
Open thou mine eyes to see
All the work thou hast for me.—F. R. Havergal.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What do we know about Timothy's early training? 2. What is said about Timothy in Acts 16.1, 2? 3. What five things does Paul say about Timothy as a helper in Phil. 2.19-21? 4. How was Timothy trained for service? 5. Paul found Timothy dependable: why was he? 6. Can others depend upon you?

TIMOTHY (The Influence of Home Training)

GOLDEN TEXT: From a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 2 Timothy 3.15

LESSON Acts 16.1-3; Philippians 2.19-22; 2 Timothy 1.1-6; 3.14-16
DEVOTIONAL READING Proverbs 3.1-6

2 TIMOTHY 1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, according to the promise of the life which is in Christ Jesus, 2 to Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience, how unceasing is my remembrance of thee in my supplications, night and day 4 longing to see thee, remembering thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; 5 having been reminded of the unfeigned faith that is in thee; which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and, I am persuaded, in thee also.

6 For which cause I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee through the laying on of my hands.

3.14 But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 15 and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 Every scripture inspired of God *is* also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE SALUTATION OF THE SECOND EPISTLE OF TIMOTHY, 1.1, 2. Paul begins his letter with a formal salutation: Paul (the writer), an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God (that is, called of God to be an apostle), according to the promises of the life which is in Christ Jesus (according to the Gospel). "The gospel is the promise of life in Christ; the life is the end, and Christ is the way." To Timothy (the recipient of the letter), whom Paul delights to call "my beloved child," be grace, mercy, peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. "These blessings are the best we can ask for our dearly-beloved friends, that they may have grace to help them in the time of need, and mercy to pardon what is amiss, and so may have peace with God the Father and Christ the Lord" (Matthew Henry).

II. PAUL'S AFFECTION FOR AND EXHORTATION TO TIMOTHY, 1.3-6. Paul thanks God, whom he has served with a pure conscience, that he has unceasingly remembered Timothy in his prayers. "Paul almost forgot himself in his remembrance of others in his prayers. And so it came to pass that the Lord remembered him, and conveyed to him hidden manna and hidden treasures, and Timothy became strong and beautiful before the gaze of his fellow men. He 'put on the Lord Jesus Christ'" (J. H. Jowett). Paul longs intensely to see Timothy, and be filled with joy, and he recalls Timothy's tears at their last parting, tears which showed how true was Timothy's affection for him. He thanks God for Timothy's unfeigned faith, which he had inherited from his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice.

"The best inheritance I can give my child is a steadfast witness of my knowledge of God" (J. H. Jowett).

At his ordination by the laying on of Paul's hands, Timothy received the gift of God; this Paul recalls to Timothy's mind and bids him stir up the gift, as one would a fire that is in danger of going out. He must exercise his gift in order to increase it; it was a question of use or lose.

How shall we stir up the gift of God which is in us? Dr. Jowett gives these five suggestions:

(1) Let us clearly recognize that our sacred fire may smoulder. To be conscious of a peril is to have taken the first steps to escape it.

(2) Let us deliberately put our wills behind our gifts. For instance, put your will behind your love, and ever extend its dominion. Never allow it to loiter and to drowse. Let it be driven by a will intent on retaining the glow and multiplying its conquests.

(3) Let us range our imaginations in support of our wills. Let the will and the imagination be at work, for instance, upon the needs and sorrows of a great city, and the gift of compassion will be kept burning.

(4) We must "pray without ceasing." We must so dispose our souls toward Heaven that the breath of God can blow upon us continually. If we drop prayer, we shut out the moving air.

(5) We must "offer the sacrifice of praise." A thankful spirit supplies mystic oxygen to every sacred flame.

III. THE HOME TRAINING OF TIMOTHY IN RELIGION, 3.14, 15. Paul counsels Timothy to abide in the things he had learned and had been assured of—for they had stood the test of time—and he knew from whom he had learned them, from Paul himself (2.2) and from his mother and grandmother, 1.3. Paul next reminded him that he had known the sacred writings from a babe: he could not remember the time when he had not known them. It was the Jewish parent's duty to teach his child the Law when in his fifth year. The sacred writings, Paul added, were able to make him wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus, "if combined with faith in Christ Jesus."

"All Christian parents are the divinely appointed priests to their household: they are to have access to God in behalf of their children. If they all recognized their sacred office, by precept, example and prayer, what should hinder the whole host of the children of the church from becoming children of the Kingdom?" (Daniel Steele).

IV. THE VALUE OF THE SACRED WRITINGS, 3.16. For teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness—for all these purposes every Scripture inspired of God is profitable, Paul declared. See also Romans 15.4. The Bible contains Scripture inspired of God and revealed to man. James Hope Moulton beautifully calls it the Book where God in human writing thinks his deep thoughts. The evidence of its inspiration is shown, as J. Hudson Taylor long ago said, when it is studied, loved, obeyed and trusted, for it never misleads, never fails.

"The word *reproof* comes after *teaching* because it has to do with the character which teaching makes. It proves and reproves. It is the plumb-line that we drop to the walk to see if it is straight. It is the yardstick by which we measure every creed. The word *correction* means restoration, and gives a thought in advance of teaching and reproof. It has in it the thought of making right what we have found to be wrong. The plumb-line may show that the wall leans, but it cannot straighten it. The Bible, however, not only shows us wherein we are wrong, but it can right us. When Canova saw the piece of marble which, at great expense, had been secured for a celebrated statue, his practised eye discovered a little piece of black running through it, but he could not make black white. The Bible discovers the black and makes it white. The Bible is a training school in righteousness" (A. C. Dixon).

A Japanese student in Tokio wrote: "I have read that Book—that New Testament—twice, and now I am reading it for the third time, and am living it." Are you?

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

It was when Paul was a prisoner at Rome and was conscious that the end was near that he wrote his second letter to Timothy, his young disciple and friend, who was then, it is believed, in a position of authority in the church at Ephesus. It is a wholly personal letter, begging Timothy to come to him in his imprisonment, urging him to continue fast in the faith, and giving him instructions as to his ministry.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Paul affirms of the sacred writings that they are able to make one wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Religious education reaches its goal and climax in imparting Christian faith, in developing Christian character, and in training for Christian life and service. It would seem that some earnest endeavors in this sphere are failing to attain their purpose. The pathetic statement is frequently made that only a fraction of the young people who have attended Christian church schools have become acknowledged followers of Christ. A system

of religious education which fails here must be imperfect, defective and incomplete.

When Paul refers to the beliefs of Timothy and urged him to remember from whom he had learned them, he is not referring to Lois and Eunice alone, but to the apostle himself who claimed to be the spiritual father of his young friend, and called him his "son in the faith." It is evident that Timothy was brought to a definite consciousness of his relation to Christ and to a confession of his faith by the influence of Paul. Religious education can only be successful when Christian ministers and leaders are being used to bring the young to that experience which is called conversion, and a consciousness of or definite relationship to Christ. Under such influences those results follow which are after all the supreme intention of religious education, namely, the development of character and preparation for service.—Charles R. Erdman.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

RELIGIOUS TRAINING IN THE HOME

Beginning the Lesson

That lonely cell from which Paul wrote this letter was in reality a great art gallery. Its walls were covered with the figures which moved in Paul's affection and imagination. Scenes from Ephesus, Corinth, Jerusalem, Mars Hill, surely brought continual memories. But no picture in that gallery of his imagination was so tenderly regarded as that of Timothy, his son in the gospel. The great joy that never failed, when his traveling days were done and he could move no farther than the radius of his chain, was not merely that he had been an ambassador of God, but that he himself had put the torch in the hand of another who came after him, who would hold it high.

This relation of Paul and Timothy is not merely a beautiful story, but represents one of the mightiest forces in the history of Christianity. All down through the centuries the greatest moments in the history of the Church have been those unnoticed moments when some minister has laid hands on a young man, in the name of Jesus Christ, and claimed him for the gospel ministry.—Halford E. Luccock, in the Christian Advocate.

The Training of Timothy

Long centuries have passed since this letter was composed. Conditions of life have changed. New realms of truth have been explored. Teaching has become a science. Modern methods have been adopted to meet the demands of a new day. Nevertheless, in this miniature which has been handed down from apostolic days we can trace the outlines which are essential in Christian nurture.

In the first place, for instance, we are reminded that religious education should be begun in the days of earliest childhood. Paul could write to Timothy that from a babe he had known the sacred writings. Some thoughtful persons of the present day advocate a contrary course from that which these words would indicate. They insist that religion is a matter which belongs to mature years. They intimate that the mind of a child should not be warped in any direction by specific religious instruction. They advocate waiting until a youth is old enough to discriminate between conflicting forms of faith and is able to choose a system of belief which accords with his own convictions and his conscious needs.

Most of us, however, accept the method which Paul approved. We believe that in the very earliest and most impressionable years a child should be taught the inspiring outlines of those eternal verities which form the substance of a reasonable faith. We believe it would be well for a child never to remember a time when the love of God was not known, when prayer was not a practise, when praise and worship were not a delight.

We note also that the natural sources of religious truth are to be found in the "sacred writings" of Holy Scripture. To Timothy the stately cadences of prophecy and song were as familiar as the accents of his mother's voice. The mighty deeds which the ancient worthies wrought by faith were mingled in his memory with the adventures of boyhood. The precepts of the Holy Law were as truly a part of his childhood days as were the scenes of his native Lystra or the air which he breathed.

So for the youth of today. A wise teacher with true spiritual insight will find these sacred books to be what Paul told Timothy they were, namely, "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction, which is in righteousness."

—Condensed from an article in The International Journal of Religious Education, by Chales R. Erdman.

The Primary Importance of Home Training

From a lengthy address upon Parent Responsibility by Dr. J. H. Jowett, one of the last given by that saintly minister, the following excerpts are taken:

The natural and appointed place for children to make the acquaintance of God is their own home. The most powerful and persuasive lips for declaring the awful sanctities of religion are the priestly lips of the ordained parents. I would prefer the early guidance of the illumined father or mother to the instruction of all the state teachers and official priests in Christendom! And why? Because in the first place there has been committed to the parents the psychological opportunity when spiritual guidance can best be given. We have fatally post-dated the season when spiritual receptiveness begins. The angel is stirring the waters of opportunity long before many of us dream. When wonder is just born, when feeble imagination begins to try her wings, when desire awakes and goes abroad in curious quest, ay, when love springs up, and shines and clings, the door is ajar for the gentle guide of souls. That early hour of delicate susceptibility, that season when the surface of life is porous to the Highest, is the opportunity of the parent, and of the parent alone. And as theirs is the opportunity, so theirs is the superlative privilege, and to them has been entrusted the sacred office of "taking occasion by the hand," and of leading the impressionable life into adoring intimacy with the Lord.

I note a perilous deterioration in the homes of the Christian Church. It is not only that the high prerogative of the teacher has been discarded; with the household teacher has gone the household priest! It is not only that the home is no longer a school: it is no longer a temple! The altar is overthrown! In tens of thousands of Christian homes the apostolic duties of religion do not come within the recognized scope of parental responsibility. To provide the children with food, and raiment, and shelter: to give them schooling: to endow their hands with the means to earn a living: to impart an occasional moral maxim or a needful admonition: this to countless multitudes constitutes the entire round of recognized obligation. All distinctly religious offices are delegated: they are transmitted to the school or the state, or they are forgotten or ignored. Can we not begin a revival here, within the circle of our own communion?

But if the parents are to teach, it is a vital part of our ministry to give them the requisite guidance. And when shall we do it? I think we might make a wider use of the ordinary services, and impart illuminating principles which can be intelligently applied in the religious instruction of the home. And I think we might make more fruitful use of the weeknight gatherings, and redeem them from the minor purposes to which they are now so frequently devoted. But preferably, and pre-eminently, I would advocate the holding of small, sectional meetings in the home, little companies of parents whom we can enlighten and enthuse with the requisite ardor and understanding for their great and sacred mission. It may appear to be but a small end of a tremendous problem, but it is the right end, it is the positive end, and if it be approached by a prepared and consecrated ministry, no one can exaggerate the beneficence of its possible issues.

Less than a generation ago a friend of mine brought a handful of seed from an island in a far-off sea, and its progeny may now be found in every country of our land. And in that parable there shines the promise which anticipates the faithful labor of every man, even though it be spent in an obscure corner of a gigantic field.

The Education Should Begin very Early

Professor Peabody says that we cannot begin religious education too soon. We must begin it in infancy, for if we do not the devil will. But much depends on how we begin. "The psychology of childhood," he says, "is the key to instruction. Association with highest, intimacy with excellence, a habit of mind induced by companionship with the Good, the Beautiful and the True—these well-proved processes of psychological operation wake and kindle the susceptible nature of the child to warmth and utterance. In other words, religious education should begin with religion rather than the interpretation and explanation of religion. The Twenty-third Psalm and the story of the Prodigal Son may create real pictures in his mind, while the creeds and the sacraments are still seen through a glass darkly. The same Jesus to whom little children nestled and who took them in his arms, still says to parents

and teachers, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me,' even while the mysterious problems of his nature and office may be unexplained and even unimagined by the child. Let the child, therefore, learn, not by rote only but by heart, the purest lyrical utterances of the religious life. Let him be at home among the great sayings and doings of Jesus, as one whose own home is hung round with pictures of those scenes which, even before he can interpret them, arrest his reverent gaze; and this association with the best may remain for him a more permanent guide and restraint than the most unrefutable arguments of dogma or the most unquestioning acceptance of conformity. Out of the heart, it is written, come the issues of life; and many a life has been sustained in the emergencies and crises of the world, not so much by the creed which it has accepted, as by the survival of motions and instincts, and even of phrases and verses, which reawaken the associations and faith of a little child."

A Parent's Sin

Doctor Potter tells the story of a young man who stood at the bar of a court of justice to be sentenced for forgery. The judge had known him from a child, for his father had been a famous legal light and his work on the Law of Trusts was the most exhaustive work on the subject in existence. "Do you remember your father?" asked the judge sternly, "that father whom you have disgraced?" The prisoner answered: "I remember him perfectly. When I went to him for advice or companionship. he would look up from his book on the Law of Trusts and say, 'Run away, boy, I am busy.' My father finished his book, and here I am." The great lawyer had neglected his own trust with awful results—DeWitt Talmage.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The parents' responsibility for the religious education of their children. Hov can they be aroused to their obligation? How can they be helped in this task?

2. The pathway to instruction in religion is that of guidance in the practise of religion.—Henry F. Cope.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

TRAINED TO SERVE

Beginning the Lesson

On Paul's second visit to Lystra he was in search of the right kind of young man to be his companion and to train for his work. He had tried one young man and he had failed him: who was he? Paul was very particular about the one he should adopt next; he was greatly drawn toward Timothy, but he took the precaution to inquire as to his reputation. "Would Timothy make a good minister?" he asked the people of Lystra, and they told him how highly they thought of Timothy, and added, "He is well reported of by the brethren at Iconium."

Paul was satisfied that his judgment of the young man had been correct and when he left Lystra, Timothy went with him.

Sometime afterward Paul was writing a letter to the church which he had founded at Philippi and in it he told what kind of helper Timothy had become: what did he say of him?

Timothy was the best loved of all Paul's younger friends. In his letters to him Paul calls him "My true child in the faith," "My dearly beloved son." "He worketh the work of the Lord as I also do," Paul wrote the Corinthians. "No picture in the gallery of his memory was so tenderly regarded as that of Timothy, his son in the gospel. The great joy that never failed, when his traveling days were over and he could move no farther than the radius of his chain, was not merely that he had been an ambassador of God, but that he himself had put the torch in the hand of another who came after him, who would hold it high."

In our text from Paul's letter written to Timothy, we learn how Timothy had been trained at home, and this explains why he was so dependable and helpful to Paul. Who gave him his early training? In what was he thoroughly instructed? What were the "sacred writings" of his time? What does Paul say that the word of God is able to do? What does this mean?

Being Dependable

We all know people upon whose word we rely absolutely. If they say they will do a thing we give no further thought to the matter, being certain that the work

will be done. And we know others whom we have to follow up to make sure that a promised service will be accomplished. To which division do you belong? In talking about dependableness Dr. Maltbie Babcock said: "'Surely the Captain may depend on me' may not be the best thing to say before others, but rightly meant, it is a noble self-commitment. Dependable people!—their price is above rubies. The world would be a dreary place if there were not some Christians who need no prodding or watching; who can be told and then trusted."

In an art gallery at Liverpool there is a striking picture of a sentry at Pompeii. All around him ashes from the volcano are falling, his face is reddened by the glow of the burning houses, but his gaze is fixed steadfastly ahead. He can die, but he cannot desert his post. He is dependable.

A Parable

Once a prince went to Switzerland to climb the ice-mountains. The ice-mountains, you know, are very steep and terrible near the tops. There are smooth slopes of ice where nothing will save you but to strike the sharp iron point of your staff into the ice, and then bear your whole weight on the staff. And there is now and then a crevasse where your only chance for crossing is to plant your staff and take a flying leap on it. The prince wanted a staff. And because he was a prince they brought him the finest staves that could be found. The first one was bound with gold, and had a rich handpiece of gold repoussé. The prince looked at it and threw it down. "See you not," said he, "that flaw in the wood just where the gold hand-piece joins the staff? If I were on some ice-slope of the mountain, and threw my weight on the staff, it would snap under my very hand." The next staff they brought him was splendidly carved along its stem with flowers and fruits. He looked at it and flung it down by the other. "See you not," said he, "the staff itself has no strength beneath these carvings? Were I to be leaping some crevasse on yonder glacier, this deceitful staff would shiver under me." And he turned from the fine staves and picked for himself one with no gold or carving, but with a fibre that had no flaw, sturdy and sincere, that could bear a man's weight in the moment of sudden danger. "Give me this," said he; "it is nobler than them all, for it is true; it will do what a staff should do."

What made that staff true is what makes a boy or girl true. The true youth has a nature you can depend on. He may or he may not have great outward beauty, like that staff with the gold repoussé hand-piece; he may or he may not have wonderful accomplishments and marks of skill, like the staff that was carved with flowers and fruits; but, at least, the flaw of untruth is not lurking under the beauty, and the weakness of a fickle, uncertain, deceitful spirit is not hiding under the fine accomplishments. His is a sincere nature; a sweet, honest, true nature; a staying nature; a staff nature, on which whoever has the privilege to lean will find that when the strain is greatest, and the danger nearest, the trueness of that nature is most realized.—C. C. Hall, in The Silver Cup.

Can He Count upon You?

Dr. McKenzie calls the faith of Jesus when he gave his command to his disciples, "The largest instance of faith the world has ever known." Jesus had labored three years and had met death on the cross. A little band of eleven faithful followers he could depend upon, and there were a few hundred others who believed in him. That was all. And yet he told them that he was depending upon them to make him known through the earth! Dr. McKenzie recalls Nelson's message at the Battle of Trafalgar when he wished to signal that "England confides that every man shall do his duty." "I have no word for 'confides' in my code," said the signal officer; "may I not say 'expects'?" And so the message was sent, "England expects that every man will do his duty." But "confides" was the better word, it has more heart in it; it beautifully expresses the thought of Jesus, for he confided that every one of them would do their duty. And they did.

Sentence Sermons

If you abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples.—Jesus.

In the Kingdom of God that man is of most service upon whom he can entirely depend.—J. Stuart Holden.

I will delight myself in thy statutes; I will not forget thy word.—The Psalmist.

CHRISTMAS LESSON

GOLDEN TEXT: There is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. Luke 2.11

LESSON Luke 2.1-20

LUKE 2.8 And there were shepherds in the same country abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock. 9 And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. 10 And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: 11 for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this *is* the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.

15 And it came to pass, when the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. 16 And they came with haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. 17 And when they saw it, they made known concerning the saying which was spoken to them about this child. 18 And all that heard it wondered at the things which were spoken unto them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart. 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, even as it was spoken unto them.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS

Beginning the Lesson

Our first and last lessons of the year are Christmas stories, the only ones told us in the Gospels. From which Gospel was our first story taken? Where is our story today found? Let us never forget that the story of the three Wise Men and their bringing of gifts to the Christ Child is in the Gospel of Matthew, and the beautiful song of the angels announcing the birth of the Christ to the Shepherds is recorded by Luke.

A poet, John Erskine, tells our story as in the words of one of the Shepherds:

Out of the midnight sky a great dawn broke,
And a voice singing flooded us with song.
In David's city was He born, it sang,
A Saviour, Christ the Lord. Then while I sat
Shivering with the thrill of that great cry,
A mighty choir, a thousandfold more sweet,
Suddenly sang, Glory to God, and Peace—
Peace on the earth; my heart, almost unnerved
By that swift loveliness, would hardly beat.
Speechless we waited till the accustomed night
Gave us no promise more of sweet surprise;
Then scrambling to our feet, without a word
We started through the fields to find the Child.

When the Angels Depart

There is always one duty when the angels depart: we can do the thing they told us to do. Those shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem were wise men. They might have said: "We have had a lovely vision, beautiful while it lasted, but it was naught save a dream. Let us go back to our flocks."

They might have said this, but they did not. They were like Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus Road, "Wherefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." A life of glory followed. The shepherds also were obedient. They went with haste to Bethlehem. Wise men, indeed, to go with haste, to fix the vision in the moment of it!

They found a Baby in a manger, the newborn Child of the respectable poor, poor enough to be shut outside an inn, respectable enough to make no fuss and to accept

the first shelter that offered. The shepherds saw no halo about his head, lighting all the place where he lay, such as the Old Masters delighted to depict; they saw no star in the sky; there were no more songs of angels. But they saw the glory of God in the face of a tiny Infant. They saw and trusted and rejoiced and went away.

Thus they fixed the vision for all time and made all the ages their debtors.—Editorial in The Westminster Teacher.

Christmas the Birthday of the Soul

The Bishop of Gibraltar was on his way out to Hayti in the West Indies. With him was a little colored boy by the name of Jim. Christmas morning found them on a ship away out in mid-ocean. On that morning Jim suddenly announced that Christmas Day was his birthday. The Bishop said, "Why Jim, I thought you said you were born in June?" "Christmas Day is everybody's birthday," said Jim.

Isn't that a beautiful way of looking at Christmas Day? To think of it not only as Christ's birthday, but as a birthday for us all, for of course it is, if we wish to make it so.

"But," you say to me, "I already have *one* birthday. I can't have two." Oh, yes you can! You can have a birthday for your body, and one for your soul. A man came to Jesus once and asked him how to get into Heaven. Christ told him he must be born again. The man could not understand what Christ meant, until Christ told him he must be born from above, that is, he must accept God's way for his way. We must all do that. When we make that choice our souls are born. We begin a new life, just as when we come into the world. That is what Christmas means, after all. I mean that Heaven opened on a Christmas once long, long ago, and God sent forth his Son, Jesus, to tell us all that he loved us and wished us to follow Jesus and do his will.

No matter how often we have done wrong through the past year and how disappointed we are in ourselves, Christmas Day comes to us and tells us we can be born again if we're sorry and will try once more. Fresh beginnings come not on New Year's Day, but Christmas Day. That is our soul's birthday, as little Jim said.—J. Howard Chidley in Story Sermons for Children.

Christmas a Reminder, an Invitation and a Summons

Christmas comes to us as a reminder that once upon a time there lived on this earth a Man who made earnest with the life of love. He was not rich in this world's goods. The son of a carpenter, he had to work for his living, and the people with whom he lived were, for the most part, plain folk like himself. But he saw in them friends who deserved the best he had to give, and he gave himself to them utterly.

He believed that there was a better way of life than many of them had found, and he wished to share this better way with them. They were nationalists, and believed that God had reserved the best place in the world for their people; but he was confident that all men were brothers, and that nations like individuals, should be governed by the law of love. They prided themselves on their orthodoxy, and despised those who differed from them in matters of belief; but he looked at the heart of man, and where he saw humility and repentance, believed that he had found the one thing essential. They were great sticklers for the law, and when they saw a neighbor who slipped into sin, they were uncompromising in their comdemnation. He felt that the greater the sin, the greater the need of forgiveness, and risked social ostracism in order to minister to those whom the world had cast out.

In the end the world would have none of him. His people rejected him. His disciples forsook him. One Friday afternoon he was led out to a hill called Golgotha and nailed to a cross. Yet even the bitter suffering of crucifixion could not swerve him from the life of love. We read that, "Having loved his own, he loved them to the end." That is the first thing of which Christmas reminds us—that once upon a time there lived a Man who lived a life like this.

But this is not all of which Christmas reminds us, or even the most important thing. It reminds us that there is a God in the world today who loves men as Jesus loved them.

To Jesus, the belief in a loving God was central. It was the mainspring of his life. It kept him going when he might have been tempted to give up. It sustained him when he was on the brink of despair. When he saw that men seemed callous and hard of heart, he remembered that God loved them and believed that there must be something in them on which love could take hold. When men wronged

him, it was not hard for him to forgive, since God, the all-righteous, had set the great example of forgiveness. When he gave his disciples the model prayer, he warned them that if they expected to be forgiven they must also forgive. Jesus is the symbol of the self-giving and out-going God. Jesus is God's gift to a loveless world, to show that love is possible, even when all the evidence of our senses seems to show that it is impossible.

In the second place, Christmas comes to us as an invitation—the invitation to experiment with the life of love in our own lives. It not only invites us to make the experiment; it creates the conditions in which it is easiest for the experiment to succeed. It asks us to begin in our home; with the people we know the best and have already formed the habit of loving. It asks us to love them better than we have done before, and that we may succeed in doing this, it suggests that we study their habits and find the thing that they care for most, that we may make them a present of it as an outward pledge of our love. It adds to the great symbol of the Christ-child—God's gift to the world—countless little symbols which are the gifts of his children to one another. Sometimes these symbols lose their contact with the thing they were meant to symbolize, and become just things—external objects in the world of sense and time. If this is in danger of happening to you, Christmas comes as a warning to be on your guard. The gift you have to give is too precious to be contained in any outward thing. It is something infinitely tender and private—this gift of ourself in sympathy and understanding—the kind of gift that God gave when he gave us Christ; the kind of gift that Christ gave when he gave us himself. Christmas is God's invitation to share with him in the joy of giving the gift of self.

For Christmas, with its world-wide message of peace and good will, opens a window that is curtained during most of the year. It lets us look into the hearts of men that are strangers to us and see that they, too, have a place in their lives where love makes its home. Christmas is the one day in the year when all men realize that they are members of one great family. It is God's summons to us to see to it that we live as brothers all the year around.—William Adams Brown, in The Church School Journal.

Christmas Shoppers

A little Jewish girl from the East Side of New York, who secured work in a store during the holiday season, met with an accident, and was ministered to in her sufferings by a trained nurse. She looked appealingly into the face of the nurse, and asked incredulously, "Is it true that you are a Christian?" Upon being answered in the affirmative, she replied, "You are so polite and gentle, I didn't think you could be; but then the only Christians I've seen are Christmas shoppers."—The Christian Endeavor World.

A Christmas Prayer

Lord, make my life thy song!
Help me to sing
While anvils ring!
Let brain and body join thee in thy toil,
Till love and labor build God's city; foil
The lust and hate and selfishness and wrong
That spoil the song;
Till heaven's choirs
And pealing spires
Join in thy carillon!—Henry Hallam Tweedy.

Sentence Sermons

It isn't far to Bethlehem town!
It's anywhere that Christ comes down
And finds in people's friendly face
A welcome and abiding place.
The road to Bethlehem runs right through
The homes of folks like me and you.
—Madeleine Sweeny Miller.

I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come around, apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin,—if anything belonging to it can be apart from that,—as a good time, a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time.—Dickens.

REVIEW (The Pattern of Christian Living)

GOLDEN TEXT: Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Philippians 2.5

DEVOTIONAL READING Matthew 5.3-16

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

He was the devout Simeon in the Christian story,
Holding the Holy Child on his knee.—Kipling.

St. Stephen did not get the bishop's pay for that long sermon of his to the Pharisees.—Ruskin.

She, while apostles shrank, could danger brave,
Last at the cross, and earliest at his grave.—Mrs. Browning.

He who stooped to heal a mother's sorrow, to comfort her heart with the assurance that she was not forgotten, stooped to heal the sorrows of the universe, and to make it clear to all that they were not forgotten.—W. M. Clow.

"She was hemmed in by brutal soldiery who gnashed on her with their teeth, and she was at once heroic and tender and forgiving."

We finally faintly hear, we dimly see,
In differing phrase we pray;
But dim or clear, we own in thee
The Light, the Truth, the Way.—Whittier.

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF QUESTIONS

For Young People and Adults

1. What do the Gospels tell us about the mother of Jesus?
2. What did Jesus teach about riches?
3. Why did Jesus ask his questions at Cæsarea Philippi?
4. What is the value and the peril of doubt?
5. Give a characterization of Peter.
6. How is true repentance shown?
7. What influences prepared Paul's heart for his conversion?
8. What is the nature of conversion?
9. What did Paul mean when he wrote, "If ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law"?
10. How can prohibition be made effective and permanent?
11. What did Paul say the fruit of the Spirit is?
12. What is being done in your community to help overcome racial prejudice?
13. How can home religious training be promoted?
14. Can business be Christian?
15. What does following Christ mean?

For Intermediates and Seniors

1. Who was the first Christian martyr? Why and how was he put to death?
2. What did Simeon call Jesus?
3. What did you learn about prohibition in one of the lessons of the Quarter?
4. What do you think of this statement of a modern girl:

"In my code, evil constitutes anything that hurts anyone else. If it hurts your father, mother, wife, husband, friend or hostess to drink a glass or a teasponful of liquor, or to eat too much pie, or to play tiddly-winks for a cent, it is wrong for you."

5. Who were: John, Mark, Anna, Philip, Elisabeth, Timothy, Simeon?
6. What is your opinion of Thomas?
7. What is your opinion of Peter?
8. Who was told that he was to be a witness to all men of what he had seen and heard?
9. What saying of Stephen's reminds one of a saying of Christ's?
10. Who was the leader of the persecution that followed the death of Stephen, and what changed him into a great worker for Christ?

11. What was the lesson that Jesus taught the rich young ruler?
12. What women have we heard about in these lessons, and how would you characterize each?
13. Tell one of the lessons and give its truth for us.
14. What do you think it means to be a Christian?

A REVIEW OF IMPORTANT WORDS IN THE LESSONS OF THE QUARTER

1. Complete this sentence: "Abide thou in the things which—." Who said it? To whom?
2. To whom did Jesus say, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel"?
3. Complete the words of Jesus: "With men it is impossible, but—"
4. Who said, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," and what was the sin?
5. On what occasion did Peter say, "Lord, with thee I am ready to go both to prison and to death"?
6. Who said, "Woman, behold, thy son!"? Under what circumstances?
7. Who said, "Let us also go, that we may die with him"? When did he say this?
8. Complete the saying of the centurion: "Lord, I am not worthy—"
9. Who said, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it," and what was the occasion?
10. Complete Jesus' words: "For the Son of man came—." To whom did he say it?
11. Complete this sentence: "Every Scripture inspired of God—." Who wrote it? To whom?
12. Who said, "Now lettest thou my servant depart, Lord, according to thy word, in peace"? What was the reason he gave for this prayer?
13. Finish this sentence of Jesus: "I am the way, and the truth—."
14. Who heard these words, "Why persecutest thou me"? What was the occasion?
15. Who said, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us"? What words of Jesus preceded his words?
16. Complete these words: "If we live by the Spirit—."
17. Complete the sentence: "Except I see in his hands—." Who said this, and what did Jesus later say to him?
18. Complete these words written by Paul: "But if ye bite and devour one another—."
19. Finish these words spoken by Jesus: "If ye had known me, ye—."
20. Complete these words: "Behold, Lord, the half—." Who said this, and why did he say it?
21. Complete these words: "But the fruit of the Spirit is—."

WRITTEN WORK

For Young People and Adults

1. Lessons that the Disciples Learned.
2. The Character of Peter.
3. Paul's Helpers.
4. What to Do with Doubt.
5. The Peril of Riches.
6. The Fruit of the Spirit.

For Intermediates and Seniors

1. A conversation between Zacharias and Elisabeth after the Naming of John.
2. The Innkeeper's Story of the first Christmas Night.
3. The Centurion's Account of his Visit to Jesus.
4. The Rich Young Ruler's Soliloquy after Talking with Jesus.
5. Zacchæus' Story of the Day when Jesus found him.
6. A Letter from Timothy to his Mother, Telling of Counsel Received from Paul.

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Note: Do you wish to send your copy of this annual to a missionary for further use? This course of lessons is studied next year in the Philippines and year after next in Korea. Dr. Price writes that "Many Guides are sent to other part of the mission field, for they are full of sermon suggestions for the missionaries and native preachers." A missionary writes: "The good friends of the Department for Utilizing Surplus Material who send their copies out to us when they have used them, confer a great benefit." For the address of this Department, see page 231.

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